

A DEFENCE OF
 NATURAL and REVEALED
 RELIGION:
 BEING AN
 ABRIDGMENT
 OF THE
 SERMONS

Preached at the LECTURE founded by
 The Hon^{ble} *Robert Boyle, Esq;*

BY

Dr. <i>Bentley</i>	Dr. <i>Stanhope</i>	Mr. <i>Derham</i>
Bp. <i>Kidder</i>	Dr. <i>S. Clarke</i>	Dr. <i>Ibbot</i>
Bp. <i>Williams</i>	Dr. <i>Hancock</i>	Bp. <i>Leng</i>
Bp. <i>Gastrell</i>	Mr. <i>Whiston</i>	Dr. <i>J. Clarke</i>
Dr. <i>Harris</i>	Dr. <i>Turner</i>	Archd. <i>Gurdon</i>
Bp. <i>Bradford</i>	Dr. <i>Butler</i>	Dr. <i>Burnet</i>
Bp. <i>Blackball</i>	Dr. <i>Woodward</i>	Dr. <i>Berriman</i>

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

With a GENERAL INDEX.

By *GILBERT BURNET*,
 Vicar of *Coggeshall, Essex*.

The SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for *CHARLES HITCH and LACY HAWES*, at the
Red-Lion, in Pater-noster-R. MDCCLII.

RECEIVED
JAN 1 1891

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

RECEIVED
JAN 1 1891

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God
EDMUND,
Lord Bishop of *London.*

My Lord,

THE Dedication of this Abridgment does not only of Right belong to your Lordship, as a Trustee of the Lectures, but also as an eminent Defender of the same Cause, which the honourable Founder designed to promote by his pious Benefaction. And I hope I have in such a Manner executed what I present to your Lordship, as may answer the general Use for which it was designed.

The Originals are confessedly a noble Treasure of spiritual Knowledge, from whence studious Persons, who are desirous of Truth, may be furnished with proper Means of information: But as they are too voluminous for many to read, and at too great a Price for many to purchase, and withal very difficult to be come at; I thought it an useful Piece of Service to reduce them to such a Size, and to so small a Price as might encourage Men to acquaint themselves with the Substance of those excellent

DEDICATION.

lent Discourses of natural and revealed Religion, whereby they may be better enabled *to give a Reason of the Faith that is in them*, and be provided with proper Weapons for the Defence of it.

These were the Reasons, my Lord, of the Publication of this Abridgment: And I believe there never was a Time when there was more Occasion to *take Heed lest there should be in any an evil Heart of Unbelief*; Infidelity being now become a Mark of Politeness, and looked upon as the Result of a superior Understanding, which, by a monstrous kind of Affectation, has spread itself through the whole Kingdom.

And if this Performance shall in any Measure contribute to put a Stop to this Torrent of Impiety, I shall think my self very happy, that I have been any way instrumental in promoting the Cause of God, and adding to that Pleasure, which your Lordship always feels at every the least Advancement of Christianity.

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most

Obedient and

Dutiful Servant,

GILBERT BURNET.

Dr. *BENTLEY*'s
CONFUTATION
OF
ATHEISM
ABRIDG'D.

VOL. I.

B

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND
VOLUME 10
PART 1
1880

THE
FOLLY of ATHEISM,
FROM THE
PLEASURES
OF A
RELIGIOUS LIFE.

PROP. I.

RELIGION tells us we are the Workmanship of a superlatively wise, powerful, and good Being ; that we are placed here to view and applaud these glorious Scenes of Heaven and Earth ; and that God has created a sufficient Store of all Things, either necessary or convenient for us ; and particularly to such as obey him, has promised a Supply of all our Wants, and a Protection from all Dangers : That he has sent his Son into the World to bring *Life and Immortality to Light*, and to render to Mankind, if they would obey his Commandments, *the Promise of eternal Salvation*.

Atheism on the contrary would persuade us, that this is all a Dream ; that there is no such excellent Being as supposed, that created and preserves us ; that all about us is dark senseless Matter, driven on by the wild impulses of Fatality ; that Men rose out of the Slime of the Earth, and that what is called the Soul, perishes by Death.

4 A C O N F U T A T I O N

And what Stupidity is this, to let go the Hopes of everlasting Life with Willingness, and entertain the Thoughts of Perdition with Exultation?

This inconsiderate Behaviour of the Atheists is so extremely absurd, that it would be deemed incredible, if it did not occur to our daily Observation. It proclaims aloud, that they are not led astray by their Reasoning, but led captive by their Lusts to the Denial of a God.

Did Religion bestow Heaven to both good and bad Men, there would be no Infidels among us: But it is the Way of attaining it, that makes prophane Men let go the Expectation of it. They will not practise its Rules, and therefore they cannot believe its Promises.

But, however, let us suppose that they have acted like reasonable Men, and upon diligent inquiry have found they were under a necessity of rejecting Religion, upon account of their being obliged to give their assent to such Things as are repugnant to common sense. And here I confess, that did the Offers of eternal Happiness depend upon our giving a full assent to such Things, the Kingdom of Heaven would become the Inheritance of Idiots and Fools. And if the Atheist can shew me any such Absurdities in the Christian Religion, I will either evince them to be Interpolations and Corruptions of the Faith, or yield myself a Proselyte to Infidelity.

But, perhaps, they may think it is for the Interest of Mankind, that there should be no Heaven, upon this Account, because the Labour to acquire it, is more worth than the Purchase; or in other Words, that it is a greater Advantage to take one's swing in Sensuality, than to be tied up by Commands so contrary to Flesh and Blood. This indeed is the true Language and the Cause of Atheism.

But

But what an Instance is here of the Folly of these Men, who while they reject Heaven for the present Pleasures of the Body, and their boasted Tranquillity of Mind, unwillingly deprive themselves of that very Pleasure and Tranquillity they seek for. For I shall now show, that Religion gives us the greatest Delights, tho' there should prove in the Event to be no Resurrection.

But before I begin that, I must answer this Objection, *viz.* that Religion perpetually disquiets us with dismal Apprehensions of Hell.

1. Therefore, I will freely acknowledge to the Atheists, that some part of what has been said, is not directly conclusive against them, if they say they took up Atheism as a Refuge against the Terrors of Hell: But as I cannot expect they will confess this, I must say again, that it is great Stupidity to prefer final Extinction to a happy Immortality: Nay, tho' they should confess it, I should yet brand them with Folly, who chose Atheism rather than Repentance.

2. As to the Fears of Damnation, those Terrors are not to be charged upon Religion it self; for a good Christian is not at all dismay'd at the Apprehensions of it: Indeed it excites his Diligence, and makes him work out his Salvation with Fear. But he knows if he fears him who is able to *destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, he need never fear to go thither.

I allow that some debauched Wretches and Hypocrites are liable to these Terrors; and must leave them to those excruciating Fears, that scourge even the most daring Atheists, when they chance to be surprized with Solitude and Sickness.

And now as to the present Advantages which we owe to Religion, they are very conspicuous; whether we consider Mankind, *First, separately,* or *Secondly, under Society.*

6 A C O N F U T A T I O N

And *1st* in a *single Capacity*. How is a good Christian animated and cheered by a stedfast Belief of the Promises of the Gospel. What a warm and vigorous Influence does a religious Heart feel from the firm Expectation and Rewards of a future State? This Hope is a kind of Anticipation and Pledge of those Joys, and at least gives him one Heaven upon Earth, tho' the other should prove to be a Delusion.

Atheism on the contrary promises nothing but utter Extinction and Cessation of Being. How then can the Atheist reflect on his own Hypothesis, without extreme Sorrow and Dejection of Spirit? Will he say, that when once he is dead this Desire will be nothing? But notwithstanding, while he continues in Life, this melancholy Prospect of final Perdition will frequently occur to his Mind, and imbitter the sweetest Enjoyments of Life. Is it not more comfortable to a Man to think well of himself, to believe a noble Origination of his Race, rather than that Men at first proceeded as Vermin are thought to do, by the Influence of the Sun out of Dirt and Putrefaction? Is it not a firmer Foundation for Contentment, to believe that all Things were at first created, and are continually ordered for the best, than that the whole Universe is mere bungling and blundering, and cobbled and jumbled together by the unguided Agitation and rude Shuffles of Matter?

Can any Man with a better Support under Affliction, than the Friendship and Favour of an omnipotent, infinitely wise and good Being, who is both able, and willing, and knows how to relieve him? But what a forlorn destitute Creature is the Atheist in Distress? he has no Friend in Extremity but Poison, or a Dagger or a Halter, or a Precipice to fly to,

And

And then as to the *Practical Rules* and Duties of Religion :

As the Miracles of our Saviour are peculiarly eminent above the lying Wonders of Dæmons, in that they were not made out of Ostentation, but for the good of Mankind, so likewise the Commands, which he hath imposed on his Followers, are not like the absurd Ceremonies of *Pagan* Idolatry, which had no Tendency in their Nature to make Mankind the happier ; our Saviour hath enjoined us a *reasonable Service*, accommodated to the rational part of our Nature ; all his Laws are in themselves abstracted from any Consideration of Recompence, conducive to the temporal Interest, viz. the Health, Credit, and Estates of them that observe them.

2dly, As to the benign Influence of Religion upon *Communities* and Governments, 'tis so apparent, that it is one of the wise Objections of the Atheist, that it was first contrived and introduced by Politicians to bring the wild Herd of Mankind under Subjection and Laws. And indeed, no Government ever was or can be begun or maintained, but upon the Basis of Religion. What Community can be imagined, without judicial Proceedings ? And what Methods of Judicature, without a religious Oath ? which implies and supposes an omniscient Being, as conscious to its Falshood or Truth, and a Revenger of Perjury ; so that the very Nature of an Oath is subverted by the Atheist ; who professeth to acknowledge nothing superior to himself. Atheism is by no means tolerable in the most private Condition, but if it aspire to Authority and Power, what can be expected but the basest Cowardise and Treachery, but the foulest Prevarication in Justice, and betraying the Rights and Liberties of the People ? Nay, if Atheism were once, as I may say, the

8 A C O N F U T A T I O N

National Religion, it would make its Followers the most miserable of Men ; it would be a Kingdom of Satan divided against it self. For Perfidiousness and Inhumanity towards one another is the genuine Product of Atheism. No Man that adheres to that Sect can ever be just, generous, or grateful, unless he be sometime overcome by good Nature, and an happy Constitution. No Atheist, as such, can be a true Friend, an affectionate Relation, or a loyal Subject. The Appearance of mutual Amity among them, is owing to the smallness of their Number ; but if Atheism should become universal, farewell all Ties of Friendship and Honour, and whatever else is valuable or laudable in the World.

P R O P. II.

HAVING show'd the Folly of Atheism, I come now to evince the Being of God from the Faculties of human Souls.

1. And first, I say, there is an immaterial Substance in us which we call the Soul, essentially distinct from our Bodies. I shall lay this down as self-evident, that there is something in us that thinks, and perceives, and wills, &c.

And in the next Place 'tis as self-evident, that these Faculties and Operations of thinking, perceiving, and willing, must proceed from something or other, as their efficient Cause. So that if these Operations are neither inherent in Matter, as such, nor acquirable by any Motion or Modification of it, it necessarily follows, that they proceed from some incorporeal cogitative Substance within us, called the Soul.

But if, these Faculties of Sensation or Thought are not inherent in Matter, as such, may appear from

from this Argument, *viz.* that then every Stone would be as rational as a Man; and every Man would have as many rational self conscious Parts, as he had distinct Atoms in his Body, which is absurd to imagine.

2. As Matter in general, as Matter, has not Thought, so neither can Sensation or Thought be the Result of any Modification of Matter, which I will prove from these following Arguments.

1st, Matter being nothing else in the whole Nature and Idea of it, but Magnitude, Figure, and Situation, with a Capacity of being moved and divided, it will appear that it has no inherent Faculty of Sense and Perception.

For all the sensible Qualities of it, such as Light and Colour, Heat and Sound, do not subsist in the Bodies themselves absolutely, but are only the Effects of our Sensation, which arise from the different Motions upon our Nerves, from Objects without, and sympathetic and vital Passions produced within our selves.

2^{dly}, No particular Species of Matter, as the Brain and animal Spirits, hath any Power of Sense and Perception. Let us carry in our Minds this true Notion of Body in general, and apply it to our Substance. We observe then, that our Body, as well as other Matter, has Colour, and Warmth, &c. but we have already proved, that these Qualities are not subsistent in those Bodies, therefore we must seek for something else in our Frame, that must receive these Impressions. Will they say that these Ideas are performed by the Brain? I answer, that the Brain is but Body, and therefore those Qualities of Softness, Whiteness, &c. do not belong to the Brain itself, but are the Sensations of some other Substance without it: therefore it cannot be the Brain, which imagines those Qualities to be in itself. If they say that the animal
Spirits,

to A C O N F U T A T I O N

Spirits, and insensible Particles in the Brain, hath the Power of Perception; I answer, that all these have some determined Figure, as they are Matter, howsoever small, and that there is no more Relation between a minute Body and Cogitation, than the greatest.

3dly, No Motion in general superadded to Matter, can produce any Sense or Perception; for if Motion, or any Degree of it can beget Cogitation, the whole Mass of the World upon these Terms must be allowed to have Life and Understanding, no part of it being absolutely at Rest. Nor

4thly, Can any determinate Motion, as of the animal Spirits through Muscles and Nerves, beget any Sense and Perception? For among all the Kinds of Motion, whether direct or circular, or parabolical, or on what Curve they please; what Pretence can one make to Thinking and Liberty of Will, more than another? No circular Motion of an Atom can be all of it existent at once; it must be made gradually, both as to Place and Time, so that at any Instant of Time the moving Atom is but in one single Point of the Line. Therefore all but that one Point is either future or past; now what is not present, is nothing at all, and can be the efficient of nothing. So that if Motion be the Cause of Thought, then Thought must be produced by one single Point of Motion with relation to Time as well as Place. And such a Point to our Conceptions is almost equivalent to Rest, or at least to any other Point whatsoever. What then is become of the Privilege of that organical Motion of the animal Spirits above any other? Again, we have shewn, that this circular and other Motion is but the successive Flux of an Atom, and is never existent together, is a pure Operation of the Soul, which, considering past Motion and future, and recollecting the whole by Memory,

Memory, calls this by one Denomination, and that by another. How then can that Motion be the Efficient of Thought, which is evidently the Effect of it? Nor,

5thly, Can the Action or Percussion of the animal Spirits, one Particle against another, create any Sense and Perception.

All that can be effected by such Encounters of Atoms is either the imparting or receiving of Motion, or a new Determination and Direction of its Course. Concussions of Atoms can never be capable of begetting those intrinsical and vital Affections, that Self-Consciousness, and other Powers that we feel in our selves, seeing they only strike upon the outward Surfaces; they cannot inwardly pervade one another, they cannot have any Penetration of Dimensions and Conjunction of Substance. It is impossible that all the natural Powers and acquired Habits of the Mind, that penetrating Understanding and accurate Judgment, that Strength of Memory and Readiness of Wit, that Liberality and Justice, and Prudence and Magnanimity, that Charity and Beneficence to Mankind, that ingenuous Fear and awful Love of God, that comprehensive Knowledge of History and Language, that experienced Insight into the Works of Nature, that rich Vein of Poetry, and inexhausted Fountain of Eloquence, those exalted Discoveries of mathematical Theorems, can proceed from the blind Shuffling and casual Clashing of Atoms, and we cannot without Indignation go about to confute it.

And yet, though they are so miserably confounded, they will,

6thly, Urge Matter of Fact, that meer Body may produce Cogitation and Sense, as may be observed in Brutes.

If

12 A C O N F U T A T I O N

If Brutes have immaterial Souls, they'll say, then they must be either annihilated or immortal. This Objection supposeth the Being of God; and God can as easily annihilate as create. Or if they be immortal, what need we be concerned about it? 'Tis only by the good Pleasure of their Maker. And if they be Engines and Machines, as *Cartesius* thought, I admire and adore the divine Artifice of such a wonderful Contrivance; but I deny that they have any reason, if they be nothing but Matter.

Omnipotence cannot create cogitative Body, though not from any Imperfection in the Power of God, but an Incapacity in the Subject, and this the *Cartesians* allow. Do but convince them that Brutes have the least Participation of Thought, and they'll retract their Opinion, for none but Atheists join the two Notions together, and believe Brutes to be rational or sensitive Machines.

And now having shewn, that Sense and Perception can never be the product of Matter and Motion, it remains that it must necessarily proceed from some incorporeal Substance within us. And though we cannot conceive the Manner of the Soul's Action and Passion, nor what hold it can lay on the Body when it moves it, yet we are as certain that it doth so, as of any Truth whatsoever. All that I resolve into the sole Pleasure of our omnipotent Creator, whose Existence is plainly deducible from the Proof of an immaterial Soul. For seeing, as we have shewn, that there is an incorporeal Substance within us, it must either be from Eternity, which is absurd, or it must come out of nothing without any efficient Cause. Something therefore must have created our Souls, and that Something must itself have all the Perfections it has given to them. There is therefore an immaterial and intelligent Being that created our
Souls,

Souls, which Being was either eternal itself, or created immediately or ultimately by some other Eternal that had those Perfections. There is therefore an *eternal, immaterial, intelligent Creator*; all which together are the Attributes of God alone.

P R O P. III.

HAVING shewn the Existence of God from the Faculties of the Soul; I proceed next to shew, that the organical Structure of human Bodies is unquestionably the Workmanship of a most wise, powerful, and beneficent Maker.

1st, That the Bodies of Men or other Animals are excellently well fitted for Life, and Motion, and Sensation, and the several Parts of them, well adapted and accommodated to their particular Functions, is not the Matter in Question between us and the Atheists; for they agree with us as to the Fitness of Man's Body, and its several Parts to its various Functions; but the Point in Debate and the Subject of our present Undertaking is, whether this acknowledged Fitness of human Bodies, must be attributed, as we say, to a wise and good God; or, as the Atheists aver, to dead, senseless Matter? They have contrived many Tricks to evade this Proof of a Deity; all which I will propose and refute in order.

And 1st, I will answer their Exceptions against our Account. And

2^{dly}, Confute all the Reasons and Explications they can give of their own.

1st, They may except, that if this Body of ours is the Workmanship of an infinitely wise, good, and powerful Being, he surely would have bestowed upon us more than five Senses, or at least would have made them more perfect than they are; that

14 A C O N F U T A T I O N

that he, if he was good, would not subject it to so many Diseases, and have made it of so short a Duration.

To which I reply, *1st*, As to the five Senses, Why does the Atheist complain thus? Does he suspect that there are any more ways of Sensation than we have? Has he any Notion of more? So far from it, that he cannot add any thing to those he hath, he cannot imagine one new Colour, Smell, or Taste. Why then does he suppose, that a Body is capable of more? If he had ten Senses, he might suspect there were more; and therefore in both Cases 'tis unreasonable.

2dly, As to the Perfection of the Senses, they are suited to our Condition.

If the Eye were so piercing as to see an hundred times further than we do, it would do us little Service, the Woods and Hills, or Convexity of the Earth would hinder our Sight, unless we lived always on the Top of Mountains, or had Wings to fly aloft; or if the Eye were so acute as to rival the finest Microscopes, it would be a Curse, and not a Blessing to us, such a Faculty of Sight so disproportioned to our other Senses, and to the Objects about us, would be very little better than Blindness itself; the Sight of our own selves would affright us, and all Things would appear rugged and deformed.

And again, God has furnished us with Invention, so that by optical Glasses we can more than supply that imaginary Defect of our own Eyes, and perhaps discover more minute and remote Bodies than the Atheist would desire to do without it. So likewise if our Sense of *Hearing* were exalted proportionably to the former, what a miserable Condition would Mankind be in, nothing could be done in secrecy. Every Breath of Wind would disturb us, and we must be inevitably
stricken

stricken deaf or dead with the Noise of a Clap of Thunder; and the like inconvenience would follow, if the Sense of *Feeling* was advanced to such a Degree as the Atheist requires. We could not sustain the Pressure of our Clothes, much less carry Burthens; we could not bear the Assault of an Insect, or a Feather, or a puff of Air without Pain. In a word, all the Emendations that the Atheist would make in our Senses, would prove the ruin of Mankind.

As to the Distempers of the Body and Shortness of Life, it is no wonder that the Atheist lays a Stress upon this Objection. Pain and Death must be terrible to such a one; and no Doubt had he had the making of himself, he would have framed a Constitution that could have kept pace with his insatiable Lusts, and have held out vigorous a thousand Years in a perpetual Debauch.

But we, *1st*, instead of replying against God, why hast thou made me thus? adore him for his Mercy to us, and impute no Unkindness to him, that he has placed us no higher. *2dly*, Religion gives us a very good Account of our present Infirmities, and tells us, that it was first by Disobedience and Sin, that Diseases and Death came into the World. *3dly*, The Distempers of the Body are not so formidable to a religious Man as to an Atheist; he looks upon them as the Chastisements of his heavenly Father, to wean him from this World, where he is a Traveller, and to fix his Thoughts where his Country and Dwelling is. *4thly*, Most of our Distempers are of our own making, and not to be charged upon God, who yet has been so good as to create Store of Medicines to cure the very Distempers we bring upon our selves. *5thly*, The Atheist may complain of the Shortness of Life, but he would make the same Complaint were it Ages longer. But we, instead of repining

ing at God that we do not live eight or nine hundred Years, give him Thanks that he has contracted the Days of our Tryal, and receives us into his everlasting Habitations so soon.

Having answered all the Atheist's Exceptions against our Account of the Production of Mankind, I come now to examine all the Reasons and Explications of their own.

The Atheists upon this Occasion are divided into Sects. Some will have Mankind to have been from Eternity. Some are positive for a Beginning, and they are subdivided into three Parties. The first ascribe the Origin of Men to the Influence of the Stars. Others reject all Astrology; and some of these mechanically produce Mankind by the Action of the Sun upon duly prepar'd Matter. But others think, that after infinite Blundering our Bodies jumped into this Figure by Chance. All which Opinions I will in Order confute.

First, the Assertion that Mankind have been from Eternity, I will prove to be Nonsense, and contrary to matter of Fact. Infinite Generations of Men, they say, are past, so that each of those infinite Generations was once in its turn actually present; therefore all, except one, were once future, which is absurd: For either that one Generation must have been infinite, which is Nonsense, or it was the finite beginning of infinite Generations, which is Nonsense too.

Again. Infinite past Generations of Men were once present, therefore there may be some one Man given, that was at an infinite Distance from us; therefore that Man's Son suppose forty Years younger, was either at an infinite or finite Distance from us; if infinite, then one infinite is longer by forty Years than another, which is absurd; if at finite, then forty years added to finite, makes it infinite, which is as absurd as the other.

Again,

Again : The Number of dead Men (they say) are infinite ; but the Number of Eyes of those Men are twice as much as that of the Men themselves ; so that we have here one Infinite twice as great as another. Thus we see it impossible, that any successive Duration should be positively infinite. But these Difficulties cannot be applied to the eternal Duration of God ; for tho' we cannot comprehend Eternity and Infinity, yet we understand what they are not. Something we are sure must have existed from Eternity : So that if this pre-existent Eternity is not compatible with a successive Duration, as it is not, it follows, that some Being, tho' above our finite Comprehensions, must have had an invariable Continuance from all Eternity, which Being is God.

2dly, Infinite Generations of Men are contrary to Fact. This is certainly true, that the universal Species of Mankind hath had a gradual Increase (See *Observations upon the Bills of Mortality.*) Now if Mankind do increase, tho' never so slowly, suppose but one Couple in an Age, 'tis enough to evince the Falshood of infinite Generations past. For tho' the Atheist should contend that there were ten thousand million Couple of Men now in being, 'tis but going back so many Ages, and we descend to a single original Pair. And 'tis all one in respect of eternal Duration yet behind, whether we begin the World so many millions of Ages ago, or but six thousand Years.

But the known beginning of Empires, and Invention of Arts and Sciences, destroy the Opinion of infinite Generations, for nothing could have been invented, or improved by the successful Industry or Curiosity of our own, if infinite Generations had gone before.

If the Atheist answers to this, that tho' Mankind have perpetually increased, there may have been

18 A C O N F U T A T I O N .

universal Deluges, which, at certain Periods, may have destroy'd all Mankind, except some few ignorant Mountaineers, so that the Memoirs of former Times, and the Knowledge of Arts and Sciences might be lost. I answer, that upon this Supposition, there must here have been infinite Deluges past, if he admits one: For then he must assert, that there were infinite Generations, and an infinite Increase of Men before the first Deluge, and then the World could not hold them: If he asserts infinite Deluges, the Argument against infinite past Generations is applicable to this.

2dly, Such universal Deluges must be produced in a natural Way, God being out of the Question; and therefore, as the Water would rise gradually, Men might retreat to the Mountains, which they allow not to be entirely overflown, and so save themselves, and preserve the Knowledge of Arts, Sciences, and Histories.

3dly, What is there that can naturally effect a Deluge? There is not Water enough to do it; and if the Atmosphere was reduced into Water, it is thought it would make but an Orb 32 Feet deep, which would be swallowed up by the Cavity of the Sea, and the depressed Parts of the Earth, and be a feeble Attempt towards an universal Deluge. But then what immense Weight is there above, that must overcome the expansive Force of the Air, and compress it into near the thousandth Part of the Room it now takes up?

2dly, I come now to examine the Opinion of those who ascribe the Origin of Men to the Influence of the Stars.

Tho' the Astrologer may perhaps offer some physical Reasons for a general Influence of the Stars upon terrestrial Bodies, yet as Astrology is considered as a System of Rules and Propositions, he will not pretend to give any Reason of it *a priori*,
but

but resolves all that into Tradition founded upon long Observation, and is now daily confirmed by Events that answer the Predictions. But where is there any Tradition of such a Production of Mankind ; they can shew none. But with their Leave, did the Stars do this Feat once only, which gave beginning to human Race? Or have they frequently done so, and may do it again? If frequently, why is not this Rule delivered in *Ptolemy* and *Albunassar*? If once only at the beginning, how came it to be discovered? Who were there in the World to observe the Births of those first Men? Those Sons of Earth were very wise Children, if they knew themselves that the Stars were their Fathers: Unless we are to imagine, that they understood the Planets by Instinct. For my part, I can have no Veneration for *Chaldaic* Antiquity, when I see they could not discover in so many thousand Years, that the Moon was an opake Body, and received her Light from the Sun.

But suppose their Observations had been never so accurate, it could add no Authority to modern Astrology, which is borrowed from the *Greeks*. *Bezys*, or his Scholars, adapted the *Babylonian* Doctrines to the *Grecian* Mythology. The supposed Influences of *Aries* and *Taurus*, for Example, have Relation to the *Grecian* Stories of the Ram, that carried *Phrixus*, and the Bull that carried *Europa*; and the same may be said of all the other Constellations. Poetry had filled the Skies with Asterisms and Histories belonging to them; and then Astrology devised the feigned Virtues and Influences of each, from some Property of the Image, or Allusion to the Story. And the same Futility appears in their 12 Signs of the *Zodiac*, and their mutual Relations and Aspects. Why no more Aspects diametrically opposite, and such as make equilateral Figures? Why are the masculine and feminine,

nine, the fiery and airy, and watery and earthy Signs all placed at regular Distances? Were the Virtues of the Stars disposed in that Order, on purpose only to make a pretty Diagram upon Paper? If there was no Counsel at making the World, how came the Asterisms of the same Nature and Energies, to be so harmoniously placed at regular Intervals? And how could all the Stars of one Asterism conspire to constitute an universal? But what need there many Words, as if the late Discoveries of the Celestial Bodies had not detected the Imposture of Astrology? The Planet *Saturn* is found to be encircled with a Ring, and to have five lesser Planets move about him, and *Jupiter* four Satellites. Now the Astrologers, who never dream'd of these Planets, have always declared, that when *Jupiter* and *Saturn* come about again to any given Point, they exert, considered by themselves, the same Influence as before; but 'tis now manifest, that when either of them return to the same Point, the Planets about them have a different Situation, in respect of us and each other, than they had before, and consequently their joint Influence must perpetually vary: Or if the Influences be convey'd hither distinct, yet sometimes some of the little Planets will eclipse the great one at any given Point, and therefore obstruct the Influence.

As to their Predictions. There is but a true and a false in any telling of Fortune; and a Man that never hits on the right Side, cannot be called a bad Guesier, but must miss out of Design, and be notably skillful at lighting on the wrong. And were there not formerly as great Pretensions to it in the old Augurs and South-Sayers from the superstitious Observation of Entrails of Cows, &c.? Nay, they had better Reason for it, for they supposed some *Dæmons* directed their Indications; so likewise the *Chaldean* and *Egyptian* Astrologers were more

more excusable, they believed the Stars to be Gods, and therefore had some Reason to suspect they might govern human Affairs; but I can see no Reason for the Atheist's Credit in such Influences, who acknowledges nothing beside Matter, and Motion; so that all that he can conceive to be transmitted hither from the Stars, must be performed either by Mechanism or Accident. But that Mechanism or Accident can produce a human Body, I shall refute in the next place.

The mechanical or corpuscular Philosophy has, after long contempt, been lately reviv'd, and shewn to be greatly useful in Physiology, above the vulgar Doctrines of real Qualities, and substantial Forms. And I have shewn above how friendly it is to the Immateriality of the Soul, and consequently to the Existence of a supreme spiritual Being. And I may have occasion to shew further, that the Powers of Mechanism depend on God; for if we consider the Phænomena of the material World, we shall find its Frame to be preserved by Gravitation alone. Now it may be proved that this Gravity, the great Basis of all Mechanism, is not it self mechanical, but the immediate Fiat of God; and that Bodies have not the Power of tending towards a Centre, either from other Bodies, or from themselves. This will destroy all the Batteries that the Atheists have raised against Heaven; for if no compound Body can subsist without Gravity; and Gravity do immediately flow from a divine Power, will avail them nothing, tho' they could explain even the Origination of Animals, by mechanical principles. But allowing the Atheist that the Principle of Gravitation is essential to Matter, without introducing a God, I defy him to shew how a human Body could be at first produced naturally, according to the present System of Things, and the mechanical Affections of Matter.

22 A C O N F U T A T I O N

And because the Atheist professeth to believe that the first Production of Men was different from the ordinary Method of Nature, yet affirms it was natural, he should make out how Matter undirected at first, fell into that Form of human Bodies, which it has not done since ; and to declare what Shape and Contexture Matter then had ; how it came to be altered, so that Men cannot be produced in the primary Way by Putrefaction, and yet the Species of Mankind continue. He should explain to us, the first Steps, and the whole Progress of such a Formation. He should tell us, if he has an Explication of his own, or takes up with any of those Conceits of *Anaximander*, *Empedocles*, or *Epicurus*, and not require us to prove a Negative, that a spontaneous Production of Mankind neither warranted by Example, nor defended by Reason, nevertheless may not possibly have been true ; but to shew him how much we endeavour to satisfy him, I will for once condescend to answer his Trifles.

First then I take it for granted by him, that the Laws of Motion and the Fabrick of the Earth are the same now as at first ; and that Bodies were endued with the same Affections and Tendencies then as ever since.

Now that we may come to the Point : All Matter is either fluid or solid ; now the Atheist must allow that a solid inanimate Body, while it remains such, is incapable of a vital Production. So that the first human Body without Parents, or a Creator, if ever there was one, must have been produced in and constituted by a Fluid. Now the Catholick Rule of Staticks is this : If any Body be Bulk for Bulk heavier than a Fluid, it will sink in that Fluid ; if lighter, it will float. And if several Portions of the same Fluid have a different specifick Gravity, the heavier will always be gradually the lower, unless violently shaken and blended together by external

ternal Concussion. But that cannot be in the present Case, the Atheist will have his first Man produced in a long Process in a kind of digesting Balneum, where all the heavier Lees may have time to subside, and a due *Æquilibrium* be maintained, not disturbed by any violent Shocks, that would break all the little Stamina of the Embryon. Now because all the Parts of an undisturbed Fluid are either of equal Gravity, or gradually placed according to the Differences of it; any Concretion naturally and mechanically made in such a Fluid, must be all over of a similar Gravity, or have the more heavy Parts nearer its Basis. But this will destroy these first-born of Nature in their Formation; for contrary to this Hydrostatical Law, there will be always something lighter beneath, and heavier above; the Bone, the heaviest in Specie, will be ever in the midst. Now what can make the Bone ascend? This will be as wholly miraculous as the swimming of Iron.

2dly, The Atheist will not offer to affirm that all Parts of the Embryon are formed at once, this would refute his own Principles. For the Corpuscles of Matter having no Consciousness of one another's acting, at least during the Formation, they could not consent together to carry on the Work in several Places at once; and one Party of them be forming the Brain, another modelling the Heart, and a third delineating the Veins. No, there must be according to Mechanism a gradual Operation; some few Particles must be first united, and then more and more till the System be completed; and a Fermentation must be excited in some assignable Place, that may expand itself by its elastical Power, and so excavate all the various Ducts and Ventricles of the Body.

Now to confute these Pretences,

1st, There is that visible Harmony in human Body,

24 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Body, as is a Proof that it could never be formed successively: So uniform and orderly a System must needs be ascribed to an intelligent Artist, and such a one as had in his comprehensive Intellect a compleat Idea of the whole organical Body before he made it. But

2dly, If they affirm that Matter without Design could by degrees form a Body by mechanical Affections, what Member do they pitch upon as the Foundation of the rest? Did the Blood exist antecedent to the Formation of the Heart? But that is to set the Effect before the Cause. Must the Heart then have been formed before the Blood? But here again, the Substance of the Heart is made and nourished by Blood. And so it is through the whole System. Every Member doth mutually supply each other, and are all coætaneous, because they cannot subsist alone.

But they will say, that a little Ferment first making a Cavity, which became the left Ventricle of the Heart, did thence expand itself, and delineate all the Arteries of the Body; but, I pray, in this supposed mechanical Formation, when the Fermentation was expanded to the Extremities of the Arteries, if it had any elastical Force remaining, as other Ferment did at the Mouth and Nostrils; Why did it not go on, and break through the Receptacle? There was as yet no membranous Skin, that might stop it: Or if the Force of it was spent, why did it not wheel about and return?

What mechanical Cause then shall we assign for the Veins? This Fermentation is supposed to take a quite contrary Method in making the Veins, by proceeding from the small capillary Extremities of them to the great Vein of the Heart; otherwise it had made Valves which would have stopped its own Passage. And why did that Ferment, that at first dispersed itself from the great Artery into infinite
little

little Ramifications, take a contrary Method in making of the Veins, where innumerable little Rivulets have their Confluence into the great Vein? are such opposite Motions both equally mechanical, when in both Cases the Matter was under the same Modification?

Again: When the first Ferment is excited that forms the left Ventricle, if the Fluid be of a similar Texture, and on all Sides equally resist the Expansion, then the Cavity must continue one, more and more dilated, till the expansive Force and the uniform Resistance be equal, and so nothing at all can be formed by this Ferment, but a round Bubble; and this Bubble by reason of its Levity to the Fluid that incloses it, must ascend to the Top, and then the Heart would not be in the midst of the Breast.

But if the Fluid be of dissimilar Parts, how can they have a like Situation in two several Fluids, when the Ferment begins? So that upon this Supposition there could be no Species of Animals, nor any Similitude between them; one would have its Lungs, another its Liver, and all other Members preposterously placed.

Again: What Principles of Mechanism can explain the Growth of all living Creatures? Why do they not continually encrease? If we suppose a Bound to be mechanically fixed, Why again so great a Variety in the Bulk of the several Kinds? Why also such Constancy in that manifold Variety? For as some Seeds of the most diminutive Plants are as big as those of some of the greatest Trees, and yet every Seed contains a perfect Plant; so the first Embryon of an Ant is supposed to be as big as that of an Elephant. And what Modification of the first liquid Matter can vary so much, as to make one capable of so large Augmentation, while the other is confined to the Minuteness of an Insect? Is not this manifestly a divine Sanction that

26 A C O N F U T A T I O N

that has determined the Stature and Growth of all Things.

If we consider the Arteries, Veins, Nerves and Membranes of the Heart, we find nothing singular, but what is in other Muscles, 'tis only the Site and Posture of these Parts that gives it the Form and Functions of the Heart. Now why should the first single Fibres in the Formation of the Heart be drawn in spiral Lines, when the Fibres of all other Muscles are made by a transverse rectilinear Motion? Let Mechanism here make an Experiment of its Power, and produce a spiral Motion of the whole moved Body, without an external Director. When the Organs are framed by God we admit of Mechanism in many Functions of the Body; but that the Organs themselves should be formed mechanically is impossible.

But to this the Atheist answers, view the admirable Structure of the Bodies of Insects; are they not equal to ours, and yet they are the Products of unintelligent Nature, that spontaneously forms them out of Putrefaction, and the warm Moisture of the Soil; and that if the Earth can procreate such swarms of Creatures in her decrepid Age, which not only have Life, but can impart it to others to preserve the Species, Why might she not, when young, have produced Men, and Horses, &c. as she can now make an Insect? Thus he thinks he has made out by Example, that every Species of Animals might spring mechanically out of the Soil, without an intelligent Creator.

Now to the last subterfuge of the mechanical Atheist, I affirm, 1st, that allowing them the spontaneous Production of some Animals, yet a like primitive Production of Mankind could not be concluded; because they suppose tacitly an universal Decay of the Moisture and Fertility of the Earth, which indeed is necessary, otherwise why are not Men produced so now? But

But that there is no such universal Decay of Moisture and Fertility of the Earth, I thus prove.

All Judges agree, that every Particle of Matter gravitates to its Centre, so that the smallest Corpuscle of Vapor, supposing it to be exhaled to the Top of the Atmosphere, must descend again. If the Atheist should suspect that the Atmosphere is continued to the Sun, or to indefinite Space, I answer, that the Weight of any Column of the Atmosphere, and the specific Gravity of its Basis are known by Experiments, and by them the very Top of any Pillar of Air is found not to be 200 Miles from the Earth; from which it is plain, the Globe and Atmosphere has lost none of its Moisture. If they insist, that tho' the whole Globe may not, the Earth may, have lost part; I answer, 'tis demonstrable to the contrary. The longer the Earth continues, the Moisture will be the whole aggregate of the Land, for the Tops of Mountains and Hills will be continually washed down by the Rains, and the Channels of Rivers corroded by the Streams; the Mud that is carry'd into the Sea will raise its bottom, and consequently by the Declivity of the Rivers be less, and the Continents less drained, and therefore increase in Humidity.

But allowing their Supposition, yet there are some Parts of the Earth sufficiently watered to produce those intelligent Plants; the *Nile*, *Ganges* and the *Menam*, yearly overflow, and the Countries they overflow, are under the vigorous Rays of the Sun, the very Place where these mechanical Atheists lay the Scene of this great Trans-action.

So that if Mankind had ever sprung out of the Soil, they would spring yearly in *Æthiopia* and *Siam*, where are all the requisite Qualifications that ever have been for such a Production.

Again:

28 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Again : If there hath been such a gradual Diminution of the generative Faculty of the Earth, that it can produce nothing but Insects, Why have not the Oaks and Cedars dwindled into dwarfish Shrubs ? Or why is not Mankind degenerated in Stature and Strength ? which 'tis certain they have not these 2000 Years. Now if the Decay hath not been constant, there hath been no Decay, at least no natural one ; I conclude therefore, that allowing the spontaneous Production of Animals, yet no Argument can be produced from thence for a like Origination of Mankind.

But 2dly, We affirm, that no Insect or Animal did ever proceed equivocally from Putrefaction, unless in miraculous Cases, but are all generated from Parents. If we are asked how there came to be such Animals in Being ? I answer, either they have existed in infinite Successions, which is absurd, or their Origin must be ascribed to a divine Power.

Now to prove the seminal Production of all living Creatures, I appeal to Observation and Experiment, which carry the strongest Conviction with them, and make the most sensible and lasting Impressions. *Vide Redi de Generatione Insectorum, Malpighi de Gallis, Swammerdam de Gen. Insect. Leuwenhoeck Epist.* And as of Animals, so we affirm, that the meanest Plant cannot be raised without the Seed ; as may be proved from the known Seeds of all Vegetables, except one or two left to future Discovery ; which Seeds by the Help of Microscopes are found to be real Plants with Leaves and Trunks curiously folded up in the Cortex, and consequently were created at the beginning by Almighty God.

As to those various Shells that are dug up in Continents, and embodied in Stones and Rocks at a vast distance from any Seas, it is believed they are no sportful Productions of the Soil, but did belong
to

to living Fishes, seeing that they all resemble some or other Shells on the Sea-shore, in their Lineaments, Texture, Gravity, and all other Properties; which therefore, are so far from being subservient to Atheists in their Attempts against God, that they rather afford a Confirmation of the Deluge.

And thus we have shewn, that every Species of living Creatures, every small Insect, and even the Herbs of the Field, give a casting Vote against Atheism, and declare the Necessity of a supernatural Formation.

I proceed to the 4th Plea of the Atheist, viz. That Mankind came into the World by Chance and Fortune.

The gross Absurdities of which Assertion I will demonstrate. For,

1st, If this Atheist would have his Chance or Fortune to be a real and substantial Agent, he is both erroneous and inconsistent with his Atheism. For since, according to the Atheists, the Universe is *Corpus* and *Inane*, this Chance, if it doth really effect any thing, must be Body; and if it is, it is a part of the common Mass of Matter, a Subject to its Laws of Motion, and therefore cannot be Chance but Mechanism. But

2dly, If he is content to have Chance not a real Agent, but only the Result or Event, seeing that all Matter, or some Portion of it, may be exempt from these supposed mechanical Laws, and be endowed with a Power of spontaneous and fortuitous Motion, which Power, when it is exerted, must produce an Effect properly casual, and therefore might constitute the first animate Bodies accidentally: This second Assertion is contrary to common Sense. For if any Parcel of dead Matter can spontaneously divert and decline itself from the Line of its Motion, without a new Impulse from external

30 A C O N F U T A T I O N

external Bodies, it must have a Principle of Life and Sense ; and supposing it to have that, which I have proved to be impossible, it would be repugnant to the Notion of Chance, because its Motions would be voluntary, not casual.

Again. If Bodies have such a Power of fortuitous Motion, they would not retain the same constant and uniform Weight, according to their Bulk and Substance, but would vary as that spontaneous Power of Motion should determine its present Tendency. Whereas on the contrary, all Bodies are observed to have always a certain and determinate Motion, according to the Degrees of their external Impulse, and their inward Principle of Gravitation, and the Resistance of the Bodies they meet with. And if they should act otherwise, it would be a Miracle, and not Chance.

For Chance is but a mere Name whereby we would express that such Effects as are commonly attributed to Chance were verily produced by their true Causes, but without their designing to produce them.

And in any Event called casual, if you take away the physical Causes, there remains nothing but a simple Negation of the Agent's intending such an Event ; which Negation being no real Entity, but a Conception only of Man's Intellect wholly extrinsecal to the Action, can have no Title to a Share in the Production. And the true Notion of Fortune denoteth no more than the Ignorance of such an Event in some knowing Being concerned about it, so that it owes its very Being to human Understanding, and without relation to that, is really nothing. To attribute therefore the Formation of Mankind to Chance or Fortune, is all one with the former atheistical Assertion, that ascribes it to Nature, which has already been confuted. But

3dly, If this will not do, the Atheist has a middle

middle Way between the former rigorous Mechanism, and the Extravagances of Fortune, viz. that at the Beginning all Things proceeded necessarily according to the mechanical Powers and Affections of Matter; but nevertheless, the several Kinds of Animals were not formed at once, as strict Mechanism would suppose; but there were an immense Variety of Ferments and Excrecencies of the Soil, pregnant with Foetus's of all imaginable Shapes and Structures of Body; millions of whom were Abortions of Mother Earth, and many that had Life, wanted the Means of Propagation, and therefore could not transmit their Species; and those few only, that we now find in being, did happen to have all the Parts necessary, not only for their own Lives, but for the Continuation of their Kind.

This is the most plausible Opinion of the Atheists, by which they think they can elude the Argument of the Being of a God, from the admirable Contrivance of organical Bodies, and the exquisite Fitness of their several Parts, for those Ends and Uses they are put to: For say they, as there are now no Animals in being, but such as have Organs for their own Nourishment, and Increase of their Kind, this boasted Usefulness of Parts is no Argument of a God; because those Animals that are preserved in Being, must have all those Parts that are of Use or Necessity, or they could not subsist. So for Instance, when they are urged with the admirable Frame and Structure of the Eye, they briskly reply, that they grant all that can be said in the Commendation of it, yet cannot admit for good Reasoning, *He that formed the Eye, shall not be see?* For that this elegant Structure of the Eye, is no more than is necessary to Seeing, and this noble Faculty of Seeing is no more than is necessary for Life, and consequently is included in the very Supposition of any Animal's living till now.

And

32 A C O N F U T A T I O N

And thus, when we insist on other like Arguments of divine Wisdom in the Frame of animate Bodies, as the artificial Position of many Myriads of Valves, to give free Passage to the Blood and other Humours in their due Channels, but not permit them to disturb the great Circulation of Life, as the spiral and not annular Fibres of the Intestines for the better Exercise of their Functions; as the providing temporary Parts for the *Fœtus*, as the strange Sagacity of Insects in choosing fit Places for their Eggs; and for the proper Provision for their Young; as the ardent Affection in those Animals, whose Offspring cannot at first procure their own Sustenance, the Atheist hath this one Subterfuge from them; that these Things are mistaken for Tokens of Skill and Contrivance, tho' they be but necessary Consequences of the present Existence of those Creatures: And therefore, unless we can prove *a priori*, and independent of this Usefulness, that among almost infinite Trials and Essays at the beginning of Things, among millions of monstrous Shapes and imperfect Formations, a few such Animals, as now exist, *could not possibly* be produced, these After-Considerations are of little Moment; because, if such Animals could in that Way *possibly* be formed, all this admired Usefulness of their several Fabrics, is but a necessary Consequence of their Existence.

This is the last Pretence of the Atheist against our receiving our Life and Being from a divine Wisdom and Power. And I hope these following Considerations will give a sufficient Refutation of it.

1st, We affirm, we have already proved by Arguments *a priori*, that these Animals that now exist, could not have been formed at first by Millions of Tryals. For since the Atheist allows there can be no casual or spontaneous Motion of the Particles of Matter, it will follow then that every Monster must have

have been mechanically formed, which is sufficient to evince, that no such Monsters were or could have been formed. For to denominate them even Monsters, they must have some rude kind of organical Bodies.

But we have also shewn it impossible for Nature assisted to constitute such Bodies, whose Structure is against the Law of specific Gravity. And again, though we should not contend with them about their Monsters, yet seeing that they suppose even the perfect Animals that are still in Being to have been formed mechanically among the rest, they are liable to all the former Difficulties, in refuting of which I have shewn, that a spontaneous Production is against the Laws of Motion and Matter of Fact.

2dly, This Evasion of the Atheist is fitted only to elude such Arguments of the divine Wisdom, as are taken from Things necessary to the Conservation of the Animal, as the Faculties of Sight, Motion, and Nutrition, but fails him against other Reasons from such Members and Powers of the Body, as are not absolutely necessary to Living and Propagation: For instance, two Sensories, two Eyes, two Ears, two Nostriis, are not at all comprehended in the Notion of bare Existence, one of them being sufficient.

The Nails also of our Fingers are not absolutely necessary to human Life, and yet are an infallible Token of Contrivance, they defending the tender Nerves upon them from Harm and Pain. For the

Pretence of the Atheists, that Things were made fortuitously, and afterwards their Usefulness discovered, can have no Place here, unless the Nations were without Nails, and others with them. But from the Atheists Supposition, that among the infinite Diversity of the first terrestrial Productions, there were Animals of all Shapes and Structures of Body, all of which surviv'd and multiplied,

34 A C O N F U T A T I O N

tiplied, that by reason of their Make and Fabric could do so, it follows that some Nations should be without Nails, others with one Eye only; and, in a word, all the ridiculous and extravagant Shapes that can be imagined, would be now actually in Being, if our Atheist's Notion were true. But,

3dly, Allowing the Atheist that there was really such a Thing as Chance or Fortune, yet it is Madness to ascribe the Formation of human Bodies to a Cast of this Chance. For let us consider the Bodies themselves, they have all the Characters of Design and divine Wisdom in the Structure that can be desired, and here are no intrinsical Arguments from the Subject against the Truth of that Supposition. Have we then any Capacity to judge and distinguish what is by Chance, and what by Art or Wisdom?

When a *Roman* Medal is dug out of the Ground, can we be sure that this Medal was really coined by an Artificer, or is but the Product of the Soil from whence it was taken? Do we not think ourselves infallibly certain that it was coined; and is there not more Beauty in the Structure of the meanest Animal, than in the most elegant Medal in the World? It has been excellently well urged in this Case, both by Antients and Moderns, that to attribute admirable Structures to Chance, is as absurd, as to suppose that innumerable Figures of the 24 Letters cast abroad at random, might constitute the *Aeneis* of *Virgil*. Now the Atheist may pretend to elude this Comparison, as if the Case was not fairly stated: For herein we first make an Idea of a particular Poem, and then demand, if Chance can possibly describe that: And so we conceive Man's Body thus formed, then affirm that Chance cannot constitute such a Being which is to expect Imitation from Chance. But at the beginning there was no Copy, nor any pre-existent Form of human Bodies to be imitated; so that to

But the Case fairly, we must strip our Minds of any particular Notion of a living Body or Poem; and then we shall understand, that whatsoever Shape should be at first casually formed, so that it could live and propagate, might be Man; and whatever should result from the strowing those loose Letters, that made Sense, might be the Poem. To which we reply, that allowing that there was no pre-existent Idea of human Nature till it was formed, yet because they declare that great Multitudes of each Species of Animals emerged fortuitously out of the Soil in different Places and Climates, what could that be less than Imitation in blind Chance, to make many Individuals of one Species exactly alike?

And, to evade the Force of this Argument, if they should desert their ancient Doctrine, and derive all Sorts of Animals from single Originals of each Kind, yet surely in this Account they must constitute Male and Female, which Chance could not make so near alike without Imitation: So that if they deduce all Animals from single Pairs of a Sort, even to make the second of a Pair, is to write after a Copy: It is in the former Comparison, by the casting of loose Letters, to compose the pre-existent particular Poem of *Virgil*; but if they make numerous Sons and Daughters of Earth among every Species of Creatures, as all their Authors have supposed; this is not only to believe a Monkey may once scribble the *Leviathan* of *Hobbs*, but may do the same frequently.

Let us consider, how next to impossible it is, that Chance, if there were such a Thing, should in such immense Variety of Parts in an Animal, twice repeat upon the same Structure, so as to make Male and Female. Let us only suppose a thousand concurrent Members in the Body of a Man, it is plain that the different Position and Situation of these

thousand Parts, would make so many differing Compounds, and distinct Species of Animals. And if only 24 Letters may be so placed and ordered, as to make many millions of millions of differing Rows, in the Supposition of a thousand Parts, how immense must that Capacity of Variation be? especially if we observe, that the Variety of the Alphabet is in mere Longitude only, but the thousand Parts of our Bodies, may be diversify'd in all the Dimensions of solid Bodies, which multiplies all over and over again. And it is all this odds to one, that no one Man could by casual Production be framed like another; and I think it more odds, that no one Female could be added to a Male, in as much as that most necessary Difference of Sex is a higher Token of divine Wisdom, than the very similitude of both Sexes in the other Parts of the Body.

Again: We must consider, that the vast Imparity of this Odds against the accidental Likeness of two casual Formations, is never lessened by trying and casting; after millions of Ages, 'tis still as many millions Odds against that Formation, as it was at the first Moment in the beginning of Things. How incredible is it therefore, that it should hit upon two Productions alike within so short Duration of the World, according to the Doctrine of our Atheists? How much more that it should do so within the Compass of an hundred Years, and of a small Tract of Ground, so that this Male and Female might come together? But,

4thly, If we suppose with the Atheist that his Chance has formed all Animals in their terrestrial Wombs, let us see how will he preserve them to Maturity of Birth? What Climate will he cherish them in? Where is that equality of nine Months Warmth to be found? that uniform Warmth, which is so necessary even in the Incubation of Birds,
much

much more in the Time of Gestation of viviparous Animals. I know he pitches upon *Egypt*; but the Cool of the Nights, and the yearly incessant Rains for some Months, will certainly corrupt these Wombs of Earth, and make them abortive. But,

5thly, If we allow that Nature may bring forth the young Infants, what Nurseries and Sustenance has she provided? For not only Man, but the Species of most Beings must have been lost for want of feeding; for except Fish and Insects, there are few or no Creatures can provide for themselves at first. So that unless they suppose Mother Earth to be a great Animal, and to have nurtured her Offspring with the tenderest Care, they must have perished.

But 6thly, Supposing the first Animals were fed we know not how; How would he preserve human Race from Beasts of Prey, who arriving at the top of their Strength in a Year or two, must have worried these Brats of the Atheists before they had Strength to oppose them?

But supposing they left these Wombs in the prime of their Strength, yet they would not be in a better Condition, there would be many Species of Beasts to Prey their Enemies, who would increase greatly, before the Sons of the first Men could assist their Parents, or encourage them with new Hopes of Posterity. And we must consider too, that those Men were uncivilized, without Language, without mutual Society, and without Arms of Defence; an obvious Prey exposed to the Ravage of devouring Beasts, a sorry Plantation towards peopling of a World.

I have now followed the Atheists through many dark Mazes of Error and Extravagance. And I appeal to every impartial Judge, whether those noble Faculties of our Souls may be only a meer Sound and Eccho from the Clashing of senseless

38 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Atoms, or must proceed from a spiritual Substance of a heavenly and divine Extraction? Whether these admirable Fabricks of our Bodies shall be ascribed to the fatal Motions or fortuitous Shufflings of blind Matter, or rather beyond Controversy to the Wisdom and Contrivance of the Almighty Author of all Things, *who is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working.*

P R O P. IV.

I COME now to another Proof of a Deity, from the Frame and System of the inanimate Part of the World.

Our Adversaries have used the same Methods to elude the present Argument from the Frame of the World, as they have done the former from the Origin of Mankind.

Some maintain that this World has existed from Eternity.

Others allow, that the Forms of particular Worlds are corruptible: So that our System cannot have sustained an infinite Duration past; but however that Body in general is self-existent and eternal; which being divided into infinite Particles, and endued with inseparable Power of Motion, by their omnifarious Concurfions and Combinations, &c. there arise an infinite Number of Worlds.

As to the Mode of Production of Worlds, some ascribe it to Fortune, others to Mechanism or Nature; all which Opinions I will refute in Order.

I. I will prove it impossible that the System or Frame of the World should be eternal.

II. Shew that Matter cannot have born an infinite Duration past, nor Motion coexisted eternally.

III. That even allowing Matter to be eternal, in the Epicurean Way, and Motion coequal with it, yet that Atoms of themselves could never by all kinds

kinds of Motion have fallen into this or such like possible System.

And IV. Shew, *a posteriori*, that the Order and Beauty of the inanimate World, the discernible Ends and final Causes of them, and a Meliority above what was necessary to be, prove it to be the Work of an intelligent and good Being.

I. That this System or Frame of the World is not eternal.

We grant that a Thing may be eternal though its Duration be terminated at one End; as for instance, human Souls are immortal, though there was a Time when they were nothing: And therefore their infinite Duration will always be bounded at one Extreme by that first Beginning of Existence. So that for aught appears as yet, the Revolutions of the Earth and other Planets about the Sun, though they be limited at one End by the present Revolution, may nevertheless be without any Beginning. But then this Duration of human Souls is only *potentially* infinite, and consists in an endless Capacity of Continuance, without ever ceasing to be; but their Duration can never be positively eternal, because no Moment can be assigned, wherein it shall be true, that such a Soul hath then actually sustained an infinite Duration. For that supposed infinite Duration will by the very Supposition be limited at too Extremes, and consequently must be finite; wherefore the true Nature of a Soul's Eternity is this: That the future Moments of its Duration can never be *all past and present*, but still there will be a Future of more for ever. So that from this Instance of a Soul it is plain, that whatever successive Duration, suppose that of the World, shall be, all past and present falls short of Infinity; for this supposed Infinity is terminated at one Extreme by the present Revolution, and therefore cannot be infinite. And this will shew us the vast Difference between

40 A C O N F U T A T I O N

the false successive Eternity backwards, and the real one to come. For consider the present Revolution of the Earth, as the Bound of them both ; God may continue this Motion for ever, because Futurity is inexhaustible. But then if we look backwards from this present Revolution, we may apprehend the Impossibility of infinite Revolutions on that Side, because all are already *past*, and so were once actually *present*, and consequently are finite, by the Argument before. And though this Reasoning does conclude against the past infinite Duration of all successive Motion and mutable Beings, yet it does not affect the eternal Existence of God, in whose Nature there is no past nor future ; who is omnipresent not only as to Space, but Duration ; and with respect to such Omnipresence, Succession and Motion are impossible,

2dly, I will shew that the Atheists Hypothesis confutes itself. For let us suppose infinite Revolutions of the Earth about the Sun to be already gone ; I take it to be self-evident, that if none of those past Revolutions has been infinite Ages ago, all the Revolutions together cannot make up the Duration of infinite Ages, it follows therefore that there may be one assignable Revolution among them that is at an infinite Distance from the present, but it is likewise evident, that no one past Revolution can be infinitely distant from the present. For then infinite Duration would be bounded by two Extremes, which is absurd.

Again : Upon the Supposition of an eternal past Duration of the World, and of infinite annual Revolutions of the Earth about the Sun, the infinite monthly Revolutions of the Moon about the Earth, and the diurnal ones of the Earth upon its own Axis, would not exceed one another ; which is absurd.

3dly, The Arguments used for the gradual Increase

crease of Mankind, the known Beginning of Nations, and the Invention of Arts, &c. do conclude as strongly against the Eternity of the World, as against infinite Generations: For if the present Frame of the Earth be supposed eternal, Mankind must have been eternal too; for otherwise this Earth, after it had been eternally barren, must at last have produced Mankind spontaneously, without any new Cause from without, or any Alteration within, which is absurd; so that it evidently follows, that if Mankind had a Beginning, the Earth had a Beginning too. Which being proved, I will now answer some bold Objections of Atheists.

1. That if God is infinitely powerful and good, why did he not, for the more ample Communication of his Goodness, create the World eternally, or Millions of Ages before he did?

To which I answer, that the World could not be from everlasting, from an Impossibility that a successive Duration should be eternal. And this is an answer to that Objection, why he created it so lately? For if it cannot have been created eternally, there can be no Instant assigned for its Creation in time. But the same Query might be put, Why not now? And therefore this Objection is absurd: For else, if it was good, it would eternally hinder God from exerting his creative Power; because he never could create a World so early, but it might be asked, why not sooner? Or if they think that there may be a soonest Instant of possible Creation, yet seeing all Instants have an equal Pretence to it, beyond human Apprehension, why may not this present Production of the World be supposed to be that soonest?

2. When they profanely ask, Why did not this Deity make the Heavens boundless, or at least vastly more magnificent than this narrow Cottage of the World? We may answer, that a created World cannot

42 A C O N F U T A T I O N

cannot be boundless. The Nature of Quantity, and Motion can never be positively infinite, they can be increased for ever ; and was the World Ten Millions bigger, the same exception might be made. What therefore may be an Exception against all possible Worlds, can't be a just one against any.

3. When they scoffingly demand, Why would this Omnipotence, as you call him, make such mean Pieces of Workmanship? What an indigent Creature is Man, who he has made Lord of the Universe? Would not boundless Beneficence have communicated his Perfections in the most eminent Degrees? I answer, that we are not so arrogant as to suppose Man the chief of created Beings ; nor are we so low and base as they would make us, who have an immortal Soul. But were we never so perfect, we should be finite, imperfect, dependent Creatures, for there can be no such thing as an *almost infinite* ; no actual Creature can ever be the most perfect of all possible Creation ; which shews the Folly of this Query, that might always be demanded, let things be as they will.

II. I proceed to shew, that neither Matter universally, and absolutely considered, nor Motion its Attribute, can have existed from all Eternity.

For if the present or a like System of the World cannot have been eternal by the first Proposition ; and if without God, it could neither naturally nor fortuitously emerge out of a Chaos by the third Proposition, we must have Recourse to a Deity, whether we suppose he created it out of nothing, or had Materials ready eternally to his Hand. But,

1st, That Matter should be produced out of nothing is no Contradiction. It is urged, that nothing can proceed from nothing ; which only proves thus much, that Matter did not produce itself, or that all Substances did not emerge out of an universal Nothing. Now whoever talked at this rate? We
assert

Let an eternal God to have been the efficient Cause of it. So that a Creation of the World out of nothing by something, and by that something which includes in its Nature a necessary Existence and Perfection of Power, certainly is no Contradiction, nor opposes that common Maxim; whence it follows, that there be an all powerful God, he may have created Matter out of nothing.

2dly, Some Things have been *actually* created out of nothing.

We have already proved human Souls to be real and spiritual Substances: Now no Man in his Wits can seriously think his own hath existed from Eternity, either as to the Matter, or Personality of it; and if a Man could believe that his Soul existed from Eternity, such an Opinion would be as destructive to Atheism, as to concede the contrary now: that the spiritual Souls of Men have confessedly been produced out of nothing.

But if God hath created those intelligent Substances, he must certainly have created Matter, unless necessary Existence be included in the very Essence and Idea of it. But,

3dly, That Matter doth include in its Nature a necessity of Existence, is against natural Reason; and no one, while he contemplates an individual Body, can discern such a Necessity. But Men have been taught to believe, that Extension or Space and Body are the same Thing: So that because they cannot imagine how Space can either begin or cease to exist, they presently conclude, that extended infinite Matter must eternally have a Being. But I shall prove hereafter, that Space and Body are different Things; which being now supposed, they must abstract their Imagination from that false infinite Extension, and conceive one Particle of Matter surrounded on all Sides with Vacuity; and whereas formerly they fancied an immense boundless Space,

44 A CONFUTATION

as an homogeneous one; which great Individual they believed might deserve the Attribute of necessary Existence: Let them now imagine one solitary Atom, that hath no Dependence on the rest of the World, and is no more sustained by other Matter, than it could be created by it; I then would ask this Question, whether this poor Atom, sluggish as it is, doth involve Necessity of Existence in its Notion? And if one Atom does not include so, all Atoms put together, that is, all the Matter of the Universe, do not include it. Seeing therefore that Creation is no Contradiction, that God hath created nobler Substances than Matter, and that Matter is not necessarily eternal; it is reasonable to think that God created the material World also.

4^{thly}, It will be allowed as true, that whatsoever hath not necessarily an eternal self Existence included in its very Nature, cannot have been actually self-existent from Eternity. So that there is a Necessity of admitting the Creation of the World. And then,

5^{thly}, as to Motion, I observe, that if Matter be not essentially eternal, much less can Motion be, that is but the Accident of it: Nay, tho' we should allow Eternity to Matter, yet why must Motion be coæval with it? which may be produced and destroyed at the Pleasure of free Agents, both which are repugnant to eternal Duration,

III. I come now in the third Place to shew, that allowing Matter to be eternal, and Motion coæval with it, yet that Atoms of themselves could never by any kinds of Motion, whether called fortuitous or mechanical, have fallen into this or such like visible System.

1st, And first as to the fortuitous or casual Concourse of Atoms, I shall briefly dispatch it, from what hath been formerly said concerning the true Notions of *Fortune* and *Chance*. When a Thing is
said

did to fall out by Fortune, we mean this, that it was really effected by material and necessary Causes, but the Person, with regard to whom it is called Fortune, was ignorant of those Causes: But thus to affirm that the World was made fortuitously, is as much as to say, there was some intelligent Person in the making it; who designing to do something else, there were some occult Motions in Matter, which mechanically formed the World beside his expectation. If the Atheist will assert this, yet unless he will allow that the intelligent Agent did direct the inanimate Matter, they must still leave their Atoms to mechanical Affections, not able to make one Step toward the Production of a World beyond the necessary Laws of Motion.

Fortune then is only a synonymous Word with Nature and Necessity. It remains that we examine the adequate Meaning of *Chance*.

Chance properly signifies, that all Events called casual, among inanimate Bodies, are mechanically produced, with this Negation only, that those inanimate Bodies are not conscious of their own Operations.

So that to say the World was made casually by Concurrence of Atoms, is to affirm that the Atoms composed the World mechanically, but were not sensible of it.

We that do not dispute this Matter with the Atheists, may have leave to consider the several Names of *Fortune* and *Chance*, and *Nature* and *Mechanism*, as the same Hypothesis.

Wherefore to overthrow all possible atheistical Explications for the Formation of the World, I will evince the following Proposition.

2dly, That the Atoms which now constitute Heaven and Earth, being once separated in the mundane Space, could never, *without a God by mechanical Affections*, have convened into this Frame of the World, or any other like it,

And

And to perform this the clearer, I will give an Account of some of the most principal *Phænomena* that occur in the World.

1st, The most considerable *Phænomenon* belonging to terrestrial Bodies, is the general Action of *Gravitation*, whereby all known Bodies in the vicinity of the Earth do press towards its Center.

2^{dly}, This is the constant Property of *Gravitation*, that the Weight of all Bodies around the Earth is ever proportional to the Quantity of their Matter, provided only that the compared Bodies be at equal Distances from the Center toward which they weigh, because the farther removed from the Center, the lighter they are, decreasing gradually in Weight in a duplicate Proportion to the Increase of the Distance.

3^{dly}, Now since Gravity is found proportional to the Quantity of Matter, there must be a *Vacuum*. Because if there were every where an absolute Plenitude, then all Bodies of equal Dimensions would be equally ponderous, and Gold and Wood, &c. would have the same specific Weight, contrary to Experience, and the Air would be so dense, that nothing could descend in it.

If it be said that an æthereal subtle Matter may fill the Pores of all Bodies, and so hinder a *Vacuum* without increasing the Weight. We answer, that subtle Matter is of the same Substance with all other Matter, and must weigh proportionally to its Bulk; and as much of it as is contained in the Pores of any particular Body, must gravitate jointly with that Body; so that if the presence of this æthereal Matter made an absolute Fulness, all Bodies of equal Dimensions would be equally heavy, which being refuted by Experience, there must be a *Vacuum*.

4^{thly}, This being established, we will enquire how great is the whole Sum of the void Spaces in our System,

ystem, and what Proportion it bears to Matter.

By many Experiments it appears, that Gold, though that is porous, is in specifick Gravity to common Water, as 19 to 1, and Water to common Air, as 850 to 1; so that Gold is to Air, as 16150 to 1: Whence it appears, seeing Matter and Gravity are always commensurate, that the common Air in which we live is of so thin a Composition, that 16149 Parts of its Dimensions are meer Emptiness. But as Gold itself is porous, the Proportion of Void to Body in the Texture of common Air will be greater. Thus it is in the lowest Region of the Air next the Earth, where it is greatly compressed by the incumbent Air. If you ascend higher in it, the less it is compressed, so that the Elasticity of its Particles expand themselves more; and that at the Height of a few Miles from the Surface of the Earth it is computed to have some Million Parts of empty Space in its Texture, for one of solid Matter. And at the Height of about 4000 Miles a sphere of common Air of one Inch Diameter, if it should be expanded to the Thinness of that *Æther*, would more than take up the Orb of *Saturn*, which is bigger than the Earth Million Million of times. And the higher you ascend, the Rarefaction increases. *Vide Newton. Philos. Nat. Principia Math. p. 503.*

Let us allow then, that all the Matter of our system may be 50000 times as much as the whole Mass of Earth. Let us suppose farther, that the whole Globe of the Earth is entirely solid, we shall find notwithstanding, that the void Space of our system is immensely bigger than its corporeal Mass. Or to proceed upon our Supposition, that all the Matter within the Firmament is 50000 times bigger than the solid Globe of the Earth; if we assume the Diameter of the *Orbis Magnus* to be only

48 A C O N F U T A T I O N

7000 times as big as the Diameter of the Earth, and the Diameter of the Firmament to be only 100000 times as long as the Diameter of the Orbis Magnus, we must pronounce, after such large Concessions on that Side, and great Abatements on ours, that the Sum of the empty Places within the Concave of our Firmament is 6860 Million Million Million times bigger than all the Matter contained in it.

Now from hence we are enabled to form a right Conception of the supposed Chaos, and to determine whether a World could possibly be formed without a divine Influence.

1st, And first, because every fixt Star is supposed to be of the same Nature with our Sun; we may suppose, that the same Proportion of void Space to Matter, which is found in our Sun's Region, within the Sphere of the fixt Stars, may competently hold in the whole mundane Space. But even allowing half of the Diameter of that Sphere for the Radii of the several Regions of the next fixt Stars, we may safely affirm, that the empty Space of our solar Region (comprehending half of the Diameter of the Firmament) is 8575 Hundred Thousand Million Million times more ample than all the corporeal Substance in it, and the same Proportion will hold through the Universe.

2^{dly}, As to the State of Matter before the World was a-making, expressed by the Word *Chaos*, they must suppose, that either all the Matter of our System was evenly, or well nigh evenly diffused through the Region of the Sun, would represent a particular Chaos; or all Matter universally spread through the mundane Space, would exhibit a general Chaos. 'Tis indifferent how long this Diffusion lasted. If it was but a Moment, we shall prove that it could never convene again into the Frame of the World.

3^{dly}, It is evident that in the Supposition of such

an even Diffusion of the whole mundane Matter, or that of our System, every single Particle would have a Sphere of void Space around it 8575 hundred thousand million million times bigger than the Dimensions of that Particle. Nay further, every Particle would be surrounded with a void Sphere eight times as capacious as that now mentioned, its Diameter being compounded of the Diameter of the proper Sphere, and the Semi-Diameters of the contiguous Spheres of the neighbouring Particles; from whence it appears, that every Particle, supposing them globular, would be nine million times their own Length from any other Particle.

And moreover, in the whole surface of this Void Sphere there can only twelve Particles be *evenly* placed (as the *Hypothesis* requires) that is, at equal Distances from the central one, and each other; so that if the Matter of our System, or of the Universe, was equally dispersed, like the supposed *Chaos*, the Result would be, not only that every Atom would be many million times its own Length distant from any other; but if any one should be moved mechanically to the Limit of that Distance, 'tis above an hundred hundred million millions odds to an unite, that it would not strike upon any other Atom, but glide through an empty Interval, without any Con-

trast. Truly, 'Tis true in this Calculation, I suppose all Particles of Matter to be at absolute rest among themselves, and situated in a mathematical Evenness; neither of which the Atheist will allow; who asserting the Eternity of Motion, will deny both the former and the latter, because in the very Moment that Motion is admitted in the *Chaos*, such an exact Evenness cannot be preserved. But this I do, not to draw any Argument against them from the universal Rest, or accurately equal Diffusion of Matter; but only that I may better demon-

50 A C O N F U T A T I O N .

strate the great Tenuity of their imaginary *Chaos*, and reduce it to Computation, which Computation will hold with Exactness enough, tho' we allow the Particles of the *Chaos* to be variously moved, and to differ something in Size, and Figure and Situation. For if some Particles should approach nearer each other than in the former Proportion, with respect to other Particles, they would be as much remoter. So that notwithstanding a small Diversity of their Positions and Distances, the whole aggregate of Matter, as long as it retained the Nature of *Chaos*, would well nigh retain an uniform Tenuity of Texture, and may be considered as an homogeneous Fluid.

We have now represented how widely all the Particles of Matter would be disunited in the *Chaos*.

To form a System, therefore, 'tis necessary that these squandered Atoms should convene and unite into great Masses like the Bodies of the Earth, and the Planets.

Which can be accounted for by our Adversaries only these two Ways.

1st, Either by the common Motion of Matter proceeding from external Impulse and Conflict (without Attraction) by which every Body moves uniformly in a direct Line, according to the Determination of the impelling Force.

Or 2^{dly}, By mutual Gravitation or Attraction, to both which I answer.

1st, That by common Motion, the Matter of *Chaos* could never convene into such Masses. Any Man that considers how immense the void Spaces of the *Chaos* are in Proportion to the Bulk of the Atoms, would not believe that they could crowd into a close Contexture. He would rather conclude, if they happened to clash, they might rebound; or if they cohered, yet by the next Conflict might be separated again, without ever consociating into the
huge

huge Bodies of Planets. But then how rarely would there be any clashing at all? How very rarely, in Comparison to the Number of Atoms?

But they may say, tho' the Odds be unspeakable, that the Atoms do not convene in any set Number of Trials, yet in an infinite Succession of them, may not such a Combination possibly happen? To which I answer, that the Improbability of casual Hits, is never diminished by Repetition of Trials, so that 'tis in vain to expect it should ever succeed, even in endless Duration: But should we allow it to be simply possible, that the Matter of *Chaos* might convene into such Masses like Planets, it is impossible that they should acquire such Revolutions about the Sun.

Suppose one of these Masses to be the Earth. Now the annual Revolution of the Earth must proceed (in this Hypothesis) either from the Result of the several Motions of all the Particles that formed the Earth, or from a new external Impulse after it was formed. The *former* is absurd, because the Particles that formed the Earth convening from all points to its Center, would make it rest in a Poise; or if there remained any Motion, it would be too little to move such a Body, with that prodigious Velocity. And *2dly*, 'Tis impossible, that any external Matter should impel that compound Mass, after it was formed, unless the æthereal Matter be supposed to be carried about the Sun like a Vortex.

But this is refuted, from what we have seen above, that those Spaces of the *Æther* may be reckoned a perfect Void. And that the Motion of Comets resemble this, which, as often as they are visible to us, are in the Region of our Planets, and are observed to move, some in contrary Courses to theirs, some in cross and oblique ones, which evince that the Regions of the *Æther* are empty, and neither resist or assist the Revolutions of Planets.

But there could not arise in the *Chaos* any Vortices at all, to form the Planets, or to revolve them when formed.

Inanimate Matter moves always in a straight Line, unless diverted by some external Impulse, or by an intrinsic Principle of Gravity. And 'tis evident, that all Bodies moved circularly endeavour continually to fly out in right Lines, unless kept in by contiguous Matter. But in a supposed *Chaos* there are no such Restraints; no Possibility of effecting one single Revolution in way of a Vortex, which requires an almost absolute Fulness of Matter. And for the same Reason it is evident, that the Planets could not continue their Revolutions about the Sun, though they should possibly acquire them. For to carry the Planets in such Orbs, as they now describe, that æthereal Matter must be as dense as the Planets themselves; otherwise they would fly out in spiral Lines. But we have shewn that the wide Tracts of *Æther* may be reputed as a meer Void, so that there is nothing that could bind the Planets in their Orbs for one single Moment.

2dly, We affirm, that mutual Gravitation and spontaneous Attraction cannot be innate and essential to Matter.

By Attraction we mean an Operation or Influence of distant Bodies upon each other, through an empty Interval, without any Effluvia to convey and transmit it. Now if this Power be inherent to Matter, there could be no *Chaos* at all, but the present System must have been eternal. For if they affirm, that there might be a *Chaos*, notwithstanding innate Gravity, let them assign a Period when the diffused Matter might convene. They must confess, that before that Period Matter had existed eternally, inseparably endued with this Principle of Attraction, and yet never had attracted before, which is absurd.

But some may perhaps imagine, that this present System might have its Original from a former that was dissolved, as that former had from another. But we say, that upon the Supposition of innate Gravity no System at all could be dissolved. For how is it possible, that Masses of Matter should fly from their Centers against its inherent Principle of mutual Attraction? This is absurder than the other; that only supposed innate Gravity not to be exerted, this makes it to be defeated. So that upon all Accounts this essential Power of Gravitation is irreconcilable with the Atheist's Doctrine of a *Chaos*.

2dly, 'Tis repugnant to common Sense, that inanimate brute Matter, without the Mediation of some Immaterial Being, should operate upon, and affect other Matter without mutual Contact.

Having proved, that a Power of mutual Gravitation can in no wise be attributed to Matter, I will lay before you some Phænomena of Nature, and leave it to your Consideration, from what Principle they can proceed. 'Tis demonstrated, that the Sun, Moon, and all the Planets do reciprocally gravitate one toward another; that the gravitating Power of each of these is exactly proportional to their Matter, and arises from the several Gravitations and Attractions of every individual Particle that composeth the whole Mass. That this universal Attraction or Gravitation is an incessant and uniform Action, according to the Quantity of Matter and Longitude of Distance. That it cannot be destroyed, or impaired, or augmented, by any thing. That it is not a magnetical Power, nor the Effect of a vortical Motion. (*Vide Newton. Prin. Natur. Lib. iii.*) Now it is impossible that these Things should be effected by any mechanical Agent. It remains then that these *Phænomena* are produced either by the Intervention of Air or *Æther*, that communicates the Impulse from one Body to another;

54 A C O N F U T A T I O N

or by the *Effluvia* that are emitted from the one, and pervene to the other. But what Impulse can be propagated through the *Æther* from one Particle entombed in the Center of the Earth, to another in the Center of *Saturn*? Yet even these two Particles do reciprocally affect each other, with the same Force, as they would do at the same Distance in any other Situation imaginable; and because the Impulse from this Particle is not directed to that only, but to all the rest in the Universe at once invariably and incessantly: To do this mechanically, the same physical Point of Matter must move all manner of ways equally and constantly in the same Moment, which is impossible. But if this Particle cannot propagate such Motion, much less can it send out Effluvia to all Points, without Intermission or Variation; such Multitudes of Effluvia as to lay hold on every Atom in the Universe, without missing of one. Nay every single Particle of the very *Effluvia* (seeing they also attract and gravitate) must in this Supposition emit other secondary Effluvia all the World over, and those others still emit more, and so *in infinitum*; now if these Things be repugnant to human Reason, we have great Reason to affirm, that universal Gravitation is above all Mechanism, and proceeds from a higher Principle, a divine Impression.

III. We affirm, that tho' we should allow that reciprocal Attraction is essential to Matter, yet the Atoms of a *Chaos* could never so convene by it, as to form the present World; or if they could form it, yet it could neither acquire these Revolutions, nor subsist without the Providence of a divine Being. For,

1st, If Matter and Space be finite, then every single Particle of the Atoms of the *Chaos* would by an innate tendency gravitate toward the middle of that Space, and would there form one huge spherical

al Mass ; it is plain therefore, that upon this Supposition, the Matter of the *Chaos* could never compose such different Masses as the Stars and Planets of the World.

But allowing that the Planets might be composed, yet they could not acquire such Revolutions in circular Orbs ; or in Ellipses, very little Eccentric. For let them assign any Place where the Planets were formed, was it nearer to the Sun than now ? But that is absurd, because they must have ascended against the essential Property of mutual Attraction, or were each formed in the same Orb they now move in ? But then they must have moved from the Point of Rest in an horizontal Line, without any Inclination or Descent. Now neither Gravity, nor Impulse of external Matter, could beget such a Motion ; for Gravity must have carried them downwards to the Vicinity of the Sun ; and the ambient Matter is too liquid to impel them horizontally with that prodigious Velocity : Or were they made in some higher Regions, and thence descended till they arrived at their respective Orbs, each with its present Degree of Velocity, acquired by the Fall ? Why then did they not continue their Descent till they were contiguous to the Sun, whither both mutual Attraction and Impetus carried them ? Or did they acquire an Obliquity of Descent, by some cross Attraction, and so fall on one Side of the Sun ? Then indeed they would be carried beyond it, and so they might fetch a Compass about it, and then return and ascend by the same Steps and Degrees of Motion with which they descended before. Such an eccentric Motion as this, they might possibly acquire by their innate Principle of Gravity ; but circular Revolutions in concentric Orbs about the Sun, could in no wise be attained without the Power of God. For the Case of the planetary Motion is this, let us conceive all the Planets to be formed with their

56 *A C O N F U T A T I O N*

Centers in their several Orbs, and at once to be impressed on them this gravitating Energy toward all other Matter, and a transverse Impulse of a just Quantity in each, projecting them directly in Tangents to those Orbs. The compound Motion which arises from this Projection and Gravitation together, describes the present Revolutions of the primary Planets about the Sun, and of the secondary about those, the Gravity keeping them to the Center of their Motions, and the transverse Impulse withholding that they cannot approach to them.

Now supposing Gravity innate, yet this projected and violent Motion can only be ascribed to God.

But, *Lastly*, Though we grant that the World in its present Posture and Motion was actually formed out of *Chaos* by mechanical Causes, yet it requires a divine Providence to have conserved it so long. We have shewed that there is a transverse Impulse impressed upon the Planets, which retains them in their several Orbs.

And again, Their gravitating Powers so incline them towards the Sun, that they are not carried upwards beyond their due Distance from him. These two Agents, a transverse Impulse and Gravity, are the secondary Causes, under God, that maintain the System of the Sun and Planets.

Gravity is a constant Energy or Faculty perpetually acting by certain Laws: I say, a *Faculty*, for I cannot conceive, that the act of Gravitation of this present Moment can propagate itself, or produce that of the next. But 'tis otherwise, as to the transverse Motion, which would from one single Impulse continue for ever equal and uniform, unless changed by the Resistance of occurring Bodies, or by a gravitating Power; so that the Planets, since they move horizontally (whereby Gravity doth not affect their Swiftneſs) and thro' the liquid Spaces of Heaven,

in, (where either no Bodies at all, or inconsiderable ones do occur) may preserve the same Velocity, which the first Impulse impressed upon them, for many millions of Years. It appears then, that if there was but one vast Sun in the Universe, and all the rest were Planets revolving round him in concentric Orbs at convenient Distances, such a System as that would very long endure, could it but naturally have a Principle of mutual Attraction, and be once actually put into circular Motions. But the Frame of this World hath a quite different Structure. There is an innumerable Multitude of fix'd Stars which have a Principle of mutual Gravitation, and yet they are neither revolved about a common Center, nor have any transverse impulse, nor any Thing else to restrain them from approaching each other, as their gravitating Powers incite them. Now what natural Cause can overcome Nature itself? What is it that keeps them in their Stations, against an incessant Tendency to desert them? Nothing could hinder, but that the outward Stars, with their Systems of Planets, must have descended toward the middlemost System of the Universe, whither all would be the most strongly attracted from all Parts of the finite Space. 'Tis evident therefore, that the present Frame of Sun and fix'd Stars subsist by the sole Providence of God.

2dly, And in the Supposition of an infinite Chaos 'tis hard to determine, what would follow in this imaginary Case from an innate Principle of Gravity. But we will grant for the present, that the diffused Matter might convene into an infinite Number of great Masses like Planets. But then it is impossible that the Planets should naturally attain these circular Revolutions, either by intrinsic Gravitation, or the Impulse of ambient Bodies. It is plain here is no Difference as to this, whether the World be infinite or finite: So that the same Arguments that we

58 A C O N F U T A T I O N

we have used before may be equally urged in this Supposition. And though we should concede, that these Revolutions might be acquired, and that all were settled in the present State of Things, yet we say, the Continuance of this Frame, for so long as the World has lasted, must infer the existence of God. For though the Universe was infinite, the fixt Stars could not be fixt, but would naturally convene together, and confound System with System: For all mutually attracting, every one would move, where it was most powerfully drawn. This is indubitable, they may say, in the Case of a finite World, where some Systems must needs be our most, and therefore be drawn toward the Middle: but when infinite Systems succeed one another thro' an infinite Space, and none is either inward or outward, may not all the Systems be situated in an accurate Poise, and be equally attracted on all Sides remain unmoved?

But to this we reply, that unless the very mathematical Center of Gravity of every System be fixed in the very mathematical Center of the attractive Power of all the rest; they cannot be evenly attracted on all Sides, but must preponderate some Way or other.

Now he that considers what a mathematical Center is, and that Quantity is infinitely divisible, will never be persuaded, that such an universal *Equilibrium* arising from the Coincidence of infinite Centers can naturally be acquired or maintained. If they say, that upon the Supposition of infinite Matter every System would be infinitely, and therefore equally attracted on all Sides, and consequently would rest in an exact *Equilibrium*, be the Center of its Gravity in what Position soever: This will overthrow their very Hypothesis; at this Rate, in an *infinite Chaos*, nothing at all could be framed; no Particles could convene by mutual Attraction; for every

Every one must have infinite Matter around it, and therefore must rest for ever, being evenly balanced between infinite Attractions. Even the Planets upon this Principle must gravitate no more toward the Sun, than any other Way ; so that they could not revolve in curve Lines, but fly away in direct Tangents, till they struck against other Planets or Stars in some remote Regions of the infinite Space. An equal Attraction on all Sides, is equal to no Attraction at all ; and by this Means, all the Motion in the Universe must proceed from external Impulse alone, which we have proved to be an incompetent Cause for the Formation of a World.

Having proved that the Frame of the present World could neither be made nor preserved without the Power of God,

V. Let us now turn our Thoughts to the Frame of our System, and examine whether we can find any visible Footsteps of divine Wisdom in it ; and to do this the better, let us consider every Thing as not in Being, and then examine, if it might have been at all, or what other Ways it might have been, as possibly as the present ; and if we find a greater Good and Usefulness in the present Constitution, than would have accrued either from the total Privation of it, or from other Frames, it might possibly have been made ; we may then reasonably conclude, that it proceeded from an intelligent and good Being, that formed it thus out of Design.

'Tis evident, that all the Planets receive Light and Heat from the Sun : The Earth would be barren without it : It is good therefore, that there should be a Sun to warm the Seeds of Plants and Vegetables, and cherish all Parts of his System. If it had not been a luminous Body, it would have been unfit for the divine Purposes in creating

60 *A C O N F U T A T I O N*

ing vegetable, sensitive, and rational Creatures. It was therefore the Contrivance of a wise and good Being, that the central Sun should be a lucid Body.

2dly, We have shewn, that the concentric Revolutions of the Planets about the Sun proceed from a compound Motion; a Gravitation towards the Sun, and a projected transverse Impulse in Tangent to their Orbs; but now, admitting that Gravity may be essential to Matter, and that a transverse Impulse might be acquired by natural Causes, yet to make the Planets move about the Sun in circular Orbs, there must be given to each a determinate Impulse, in Proportion to their Distances from the Sun, and to the Quantity of the solar Matter. For had their Velocities been greater or less than they now are, at the same Distances from the Sun, or had their Distances from the Sun, or the Quantity of the Sun's Matter, and consequently his attractive Power, been greater or less, they would not have revolved in concentric Circles, as they do; but in Hyperbola's or Parabola's, or in Ellipses very eccentric: The same may be said of the Velocities of the secondary Planets, with respect to their Distances from the Centers of their Orbs, and to the Quantities of the Matter of those central Bodies. Now that all these Distances, Motions, and Quantities of Matter should be so accurately adjusted in this great Variety of our System, is above the fortuitous Hits of blind Matter, and must certainly flow from divine Wisdom. And let us examine it further by our critical Rule: Are the present Revolutions in circular Orbs more beneficial than the other would be? If the Planets moved in those Lines above named, they would have been sometimes too near, at others too distant from the Sun; and some would have quite left the Sun, without ever

returning: So that no living Creature could have endured the Excesses of Heat and Cold: So the circular Revolutions of the Earth and Planets declare as the Power, so the Goodness of God.

We have seen that the æthereal Spaces are perfectly fluid, they neither assist nor retard the Revolutions of the Planets, so that any of them might possibly have moved in opposite Courses to the present. Now if this System had been fortuitously formed, how is it conceivable, that all the Planets, both primary and secondary, should revolve in the same Way from West to East, and that in the same Plane? Such apt and regular Harmony must be ascribed to divine Art; especially if we consider, that the smallest Planets are situate nearest the Sun; whereas were the greatest not at that Distance they and they would have caused great Disorder in the whole System by their gravitating Powers, for even now in their Conjunctions they disturb one another's Motions.

But let us consider the particular Situation of the Earth, and its Distance from the Sun; and whether it was mere Chance, or divine Counsel that constituted the Earth in its present Situation.

We may be mathematically certain, that the Heat of the Sun is according to the Density of the Sun-Beams, and is reciprocally proportional to the Square of the Distance from the Body of the Sun. Now if the Earth revolved in the Orbit of *Mercury*, it would be scorched up; or if in the Orbit of *Saturn*, the deepest Seas even under the Equator would be froze to the Bottom. And if you place it at any other Distance, you will still alter it for the worse. It was situated therefore where it is by divine Wisdom.

That the Earth revolves about its own Center is another Token of the divine Wisdom and Goodness; for without this diurnal Rotation, one Hemisphere

62 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Hemisphere would lie dead in perpetual Darkneſs, and Froſt, and the beſt Part of the other be burnt up. But this Motion did not come from any Neceſſity of the Laws of Motion, or the Syſtem of the Heavens. It might have annually compaſſed the Sun, and yet never turned the ſame Hemisphere towards it, as the Moon, which is carried about the Earth in the ſame manner, as the Earth about the Sun, and yet always ſhows the ſame Face to the Earth. She indeed turns all her Globe to the Sun by moving in her menſtrual Orb, and enjoys Night and Day, alternately, one Day of hers being equal to about 14 Days and Nights of ours; but ſhould the Earth move ſo, one half of it could never ſee the Day; that the Earth therefore frequently revolves about its own Center, is another Token of divine Goodneſs.

6thly, Let us compare the mutual Proportion of theſe diurnal and annual Revolutions: The Earth rowls once about its Axis in a natural Day, in which Time all the Parts of the Equator move ſomething more than three Diameters of the Earth, which makes about 1100 in a Year; but the Earth in the ſame time, viz. a Year, is carried 50 Times as far once round the *Orbis Magnus*, whoſe Wide- neſs we aſſume to be 20000 terrestrial Diameters; ſo that the annual Motion is 50 Times ſwifter than the diurnal.

Now if the annual Motion was doubly accelerated it would be pernicious, becauſe the Seaſons would be too ſhort to ripen our Fruits; and if it was ſlower than it is, moſt Countries would be parch'd up.

If the diurnal Motion was ſo ſlow as to make one Day equal to thirty, it would not be proportioned to the common Affairs of Life.

If it were ſwifter, ſo that a Day conſiſted of but four Hours, it would be an inconvenient Change to the

Inhabitants of the Earth. It is better, therefore, that the diurnal and annual Motions be as they

7thly, Let us consider not the Quantity and Proportion only, but the Mode of this diurnal Motion. The Axis of the Earth, about which its diurnal Rotation is made, inclines to the Plane of the Ecliptic in an Angle of 25 Degrees and a half, which Inclination, which keeps always the same Direction, and a constant Parallelism to itself, is the Cause of these grateful Vicissitudes of the four Seasons, and the Variation of the Length of Days. If we take away the Inclination, the Northern Nations would perish; but would we rather part with the Parallelism, let us suppose then, that the Axis of the Earth keeps always the same Inclination toward the Body of the Sun: This indeed would cause Variety of Days and Nights and Seasons; but then some Countries would have always long Nights and short Days, others the reverse; one Climate would be perpetually scorched, another blasted with cold.

And if the Axis kept no constant Inclination, but varied at *uncertain Times*, there could be no Health, no Life nor Subsistence in such an irregular System. It is better therefore, that the Axis should continue as it is; so that this also is a Proof of divine Wisdom.

But because some have imagined, that if the Poles had been erect to the Plane of the Ecliptic, all Mankind would have enjoyed a very Paradise upon Earth, a perpetual Spring, an eternal Serenity, and the Longævity of *Metbuselah* without Diseases. We are obliged to consider it a little further. And As to an universal and *perpetual Spring*, 'tis repugnant to the Form of the Globe; for to those People that dwell under the *Æquator*, this Spring would be a most pestilent Summer; and as to those

64 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Countries nearer the Poles, a perpetual Spring would not ripen their Fruits and Grain. It is plain that the Center of the Earth must move all along in the *Orbis magnus*, whether we suppose a perpetual *Æquinox*, or not. So that the whole Globe would continue in the same Distance from the Sun, and receive the same Quantity of Heat from him in a Year; though the Axis then had been perpendicular; yet take the whole Year about, and the Earth would have had the same Measure of Heat that it has now. So that the Question is, whether is more beneficial, that the Inhabitants of the Earth should have the yearly Quantity of Heat distributed equally every Day, or so disposed as it is? It must be allowed, that the temperate Zones have no Heat to spare in Summer; and 'tis manifest, that an even Distribution of the yearly Heat would never have brought those Fruits to Maturity, and therefore a perpetual *Æquinox* would be pernicious to the best Part of the Globe.

And there is no Reason to expect, that it should constantly enjoy that admired *Calm and Serenity*. If the Assertion were true, it would destroy Navigation; but 'tis altogether precarious. For the Winds, and Rains, and other Affections of the Atmosphere, do not solely depend upon the Course of the Sun; but partly, and perhaps most frequently, upon Steams and Exhalations from subterraneous Heats; upon the Positions of the Moon, the Situations of the Seas, or Mountains, Lakes, or Woods, and many other unknown or uncertain Causes: So that, though the Course of the Sun should be invariable, yet the Temperament of the Air would be mutable. And 'tis well known, that the Months of *March* and *September*, the two *Æquinoxes* of our Year, are the most tempestuous Seasons. Now if this Notion of an uniform Calm be precarious, then the constant *Health* and *Longevity*

of Men, must be given up, for this doth solely, an Effect of Nature, depend upon the other. Nay could we allow a perpetual Calm and Equability of Heat, it can never be proved that Men would be so long lived; for those People, who live within a Degree of the Equator, do not live so long, as those nearer the Poles; and are inferior to them in Strength, Nature, and Capacities.

8thly, If we consider the Atmosphere, and the exterior Frame of the Globe, we may see the divine Wisdom in the Constitution of them. The Air is a thin, fluid, elastick Body, capable of Condensation and Rarefaction; which should it be more condensed or expanded than it naturally is, no Animals could live and breathe, or Vapours be duly raised and supported in it: 'Tis also demonstrated, that the Condensation and Expansion of any Portion of the Air is always proportional to the Weight and Pressure incumbent upon it: So that if the Atmosphere had been either much greater or less than it is, it might easily have been, it would have had on the Surface of the Earth a much greater Density, or Tenuity of Texture, and consequently have been unserviceable for Vegetation and Life. If our Atmosphere had not been a springy elastical Body, no Animal could have exercised the very Function of Respiration; and yet the Ends and Uses of Respiration are not served by that Springiness, but by some other unknown and singular Quality. For the Air that in exhausted Receivers of Air Pumps is exhaled from Minerals and Flesh, and Fruits, and Liquors, is as true as to Elasticity and Density, or Rarefaction, as that we respire in, and yet this factitious Air will kill an Animal in a Moment. All which do infer God's Providence, who fore-knew the Necessity of Rains and Dews, to the present Structure of Plants, and the Uses of Respiration to Animals;

66 A C O N F U T A T I O N

Animals ; and therefore created those correspondent Properties in the Atmosphere of the Earth.

9thly, The ample Provision of Waters is another Mark of the Wisdom of God. Some indeed have thought they have taken too great a Share of the Earth ; but they do not consider what an immense Quantity of it is exhaled continually by the Sun to fill the Atmosphere with Vapors and Clouds, and feed the Plants with Dews ; so that if they would diminish the present Extent of the Sea, so much they would impair the Fertility, Fountains, and Rivers of the Earth, because the Quantity of Vapors that must be exhaled to supply all these, would be lessened proportionally to the Bounds of the Ocean, for the Vapors are not to be measured from the Bulk of the Water, but from the Space of the Surface.

10thly, But some think that the rude and rugged Surface of the Earth, and the gaping Channel of the Sea, look rather like a Ruin, than the Work of divine Artifice. If we should suppose, say they, the Ocean to be dry, and that we look down upon the empty Channel from some higher Region of the Air, how unnatural would it look ? To which I reply, that if the Bottom, and Shelves, and Rocks, and Gulfs were covered with Grass, a Person that was placed in the Middle of the Ocean would not distinguish it from the inhabited Earth : Or if he were carried so high into the Air, till he could see at one View the whole Breadth of the Channel, the wide Ocean would appear to him like an even and uniform Plane. But tho' we should grant that the dry Gulf of the Ocean would appear vastly hollow and horrible from the Top of an high Cloud, yet as the Sea cannot be evaporated, why must we fancy an impossible Dryness, and then calumniate Nature, as deformed and ruinous ? If they say the Sea Shores might have been even, which would have appeared more beautiful than they now do ; I answer,

er, we should then have had no Ports, or Shelters from the Winds, which would have made the Seas of no Use as to Navigation. If they object against the Rocks, Cliffs, and Ridges of Mountains, let them consider, that these supposed Irregularities must necessarily come to pass from the established Laws of Mechanism, and the Course of Nature. For if there be Sea and Mountains, that Sea will necessarily be jagged and torn by the impetuous assaults, or the silent Undermining of Waves; and violent Rains will wash down the Earth and Gravel from the Tops of some of those Mountains, unless God should miraculously interpose. Let them also consider that this objected Deformity is only in our Imagination. All Pulchritude is relative, and all Bodies are truly and physically beautiful under all possible Shapes and Proportions, that are good in their Kind, and answer their Ends. We ought not then to believe, that the Banks of the Ocean are really deformed, because they are not in the Form of a regular Bulwark; nor that the Mountains are out of Shape, because they are not exact Pyramids. These are not natural Irregularities, but with respect to our Fancies only; nor are they inconvenient to the true Uses of Life. And let them consider, that these Ranges of barren Mountains, by condensing the Vapours, producing Rains, Mountains and Rivers, give the very Plains themselves that Fertility they boast of; that those Hills supply us with great Variety of excellent Plants; and Metals of all Sorts, which are so necessary to human Life. And who could part with these solid Blessings for the imaginary Pleasantness of a smooth uniform Convexity of a Globe? Which Convexity could never be seen and enjoyed by any Man living. The Inhabitants of such an Earth could have only the short Prospect of a little circular Plane about three Miles round them, though nothing should

68 *A CONFUTATION, &c.*

intercept it ; which little would appear to have an Acclivity on all Sides from the Spectators ; so that every Man would have the Displeasure of fancying himself the lowest, and that he always was in a Bottom ; nay considering that in such a Constitution of the Earth they could have no Means nor Instruments of mathematical Knowledge, they would not have had any Suspicion that they walked upon a round Ball ; and if a Person was lifted up so high into the Air, that he might have a very spacious Horizon under one View, the Convexity of the Earth, by Reason of the great Distance, would appear to him to be only a great circular Flat. Are there then such Charms in a dull unvaried Flat to make a sufficient Compensation for the *chief Things of the ancient Mountains* ? Nay we appeal to the Sentence of Mankind, if a Land of Hills and Vallies has not more Pleasure too and Beauty than an uniform Flat, which, if ever it may be said to be delightful, is then only when it is viewed from the Top of a Hill. Let this therefore be another Argument of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, that the Surface of the Earth is distinguished with Mountains and Vallies, and furrow'd with the Channel of the Sea ; and that because it is better that it should be so.

Thus we have clearly discovered many final Causes and Characters of Wisdom and Design in the Frame of the inanimate World, as well as in the organical Fabric of the Bodies of Animals ; from hence ariseth a new and invincible Argument, that the present Frame of the World hath not existed from Eternity. For such an Usefulness of Things as neither proceeds from the Necessity of their Beings, nor can happen to them by Chance, doth necessarily infer, that there was an intelligent Being, which was the Author and Contriver of that Usefulness.

That

That Part of

Bishop *K I D D E R*'s
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
MESSIAS,
Preach'd at *BOYLE*'s LECTURES
A B R I D G'D.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

1851 A.S.

AND THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION

NEW YORK

1851

A
DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
MESSIAS.

AS the obstinate Infidelity of the *Jews* is very amazing, I design to make a strict Enquiry into the Causes and Occasions of it.

But first, I will shew, that they do not want sufficient means of Conviction ; and that they have as much Reason to own *Jesus* for a true Prophet, as they have to own *Moses* to be one ; and that the same Arguments by which the *Jew* is convinced that *Moses* was a true Prophet, will convince him that *Jesus* is the *Christ* ; moreover that the four *Gospels* are as credible, if not more so, as the five Books of *Moses*.

The Reasons why the *Jew* believes *Moses* to be a true Prophet, are,

I. Because many Miracles were wrought to confirm their Fathers in this Belief.

II. Because what he predicted came to pass.

III. That they have an unexceptionable Tradition of the Matters of Fact.

IV. Because the Writings of *Moses* are worthy of Belief.

I. Because many Miracles were wrought to confirm them in this Belief.

This is a very good Argument, because God would not suffer so many Miracles in his Name to

72 A DEMONSTRATION

confirm a false Doctrine: But if for this Reason *Moses* was received for a true Prophet, for the same, *Jesus* ought to be acknowledged to be the *Messias*. He professed himself to be the *Christ*, and confirmed his Doctrine by Miracles, which surpassed any that were wrought by *Moses*. (See *Demonst. of the Messias*, Part I. Ch. vi.) They argued a greater Power and a greater Goodness. *Jesus's* Miracles were so many *Rescues*; *Moses's* so many *Plagues*. This Power was inherent in *Jesus*, and was imparted to his Followers. If *Moses* had Power over all the Elements, *Jesus* had Power over all the Creation.

Besides the many Miracles *Jesus* did, many more were wrought upon his *Account*, and by his *Power*. When he was baptiz'd, the Holy Ghost proclaim'd him to be the Son of God. After this he was transfigured on the Mount, and many Miracles were wrought at his Death. After all, he arose from the Dead, ascended into Heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost upon his Followers, and enabled them to confirm their Doctrine by Miracles.

And these done in the most publick Manner.

But if the *Jew* objects, that we ought not to receive him for a true Prophet, that preacheth down the Law of *Moses*, which was confirmed by Miracles, though he be able to work Miracles in Confirmation of his new Doctrine: Because 'tis possible a false Prophet may, for the trial of our Faith, be permitted to work true Miracles. See *Deut. xiii.*

1, 2, 3. I answer,

1. That *Jesus* did not preach down the Law, but he *came to fulfil it*. And therefore the Objection is false.

2. Nor can that Text, *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* be applied to *Jesus*, because he did not attempt to invite Men to Idolatry.

3. That though I should grant, that such a Prophet

phet might be assisted to work some Miracles in Confirmation of his false Doctrine ; yet it does not follow, that God will assist any false Prophet so far, when he invites Men to Idolatry, as that he should be able to work more Miracles to confirm his false Doctrine, than *Moses* ever wrought in Confirmation of the Truth. Miracles are a *divine* Testimony, or they *are not*. If they *are not*, there is no Reason they should prevail upon the *Jews* to receive *Moses*. But if *they are*, 'tis certain, the *greater* and *more* they are, the stronger is the Testimony. And if *Jesus* did more Miracles than *Moses*, we have more Reason to receive *Jesus* for a true Prophet, than the *Jews* have to acknowledge *Moses* for one.

4. We own the Law of *Moses* was from God, yet it was not designed to oblige all Men, nor to endure for ever. It was partly *moral*, *typical*, and *political* ; the *moral* Part obligeth for ever, and is taken into the Christian Religion ; the *typical* was of no Use when the *Type* was compleated ; and the *political* fell of itself, when the *Jewish* Polity fell.

I return therefore to the *Jews*, whom I would ask, why they should reject *Jesus*, who believe *Moses* to be from God ? They have good ground to believe *Moses*, or they have not. If not, why do they believe him ? If they *have*, they have the same and greater still for believing *Jesus*. And either they are guilty of too great Credulity in believing *Moses*, or of too great Infidelity in not believing *Jesus*.

When God sent *Moses* into *Ægypt*, if the Power which he gave him of working Miracles tended to gain Belief, that God had sent him, and that the greater number of Miracles, which he should do, would have the greater Force to this Purpose, then the Miracles that *Jesus* did, are a good Evidence of his Mission from God. And that he wrought more than *Moses* did, gives us still a greater Ground to receive him, than *Moses* gave the Men of *Israel*.

II. An-

74 A DEMONSTRATION

II. Another Reason why the *Jews* believe *Moses*, is, because what he predicted did come to pass. This I allow ; and 'tis certain, by this Way of arguing, we have not only the same, but a much stronger Evidence that *Jesus* was sent by God. And if for this Reason the *Jews* were bound to believe *Moses*, they ought for the same Reason, and much greater, to believe *Jesus*. Did *Moses* foretell future Contingencies ? so did *Jesus* likewise. He foretold his Death, the Place where, and the Manner of it ; by whom he should be betray'd, and deny'd ; he foretold his own Resurrection, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Sorrows of his Followers, the Success of his Religion, the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and many other Things.

If the Prophets in the Old Testament foretold Things to come, so did also the Disciples of *Jesus*. See 1 *Tim.* iv. 2 *Thes.* ii. 3—9.

But before I leave this Matter, I will compare what the *Jew* says in Behalf of *Moses*, with what hath been said in Behalf of *Jesus*, and shew how very short the one comes of the other.

'Tis said, that *Moses*, *Deut.* xxviii. 49. foretold the Captivity of *Israel*, and their Dispersion by the *Romans* ; which is brought as a clear Demonstration to prove *Moses* was a true Prophet, because the Event which happened 1500 Years afterward, confirmed this Prediction. Now whatever Force there is in this Argument for the confirming the Prophecy of *Moses*, 'tis certain that it could not operate 'till about 1500 Years afterward ; and yet all that Time *Moses* was justly received as a true Prophet, and therefore the *Jews* ought to lay no Stress upon it, because he was received justly as a Prophet without it.

Again : *Moses* would have been as true a Prophet, had not the *Jews* been captivated by the *Romans* ; for allowing that that Text, *Deut.* xxviii.

49. predicts that Calamity for their Sins; yet Predictions do not necessarily infer the Event. Their Repentance thro' God's Mercy, might have revoked the Sentence, as it did in the Case of *Niniveh*, *Jonah*, chap. iii. and in the Case of *Hezekiah*, *Isa.* xxxviii. 1. See also *Jer.* xviii. 7, 8. where Predictions of Evils do not declare God's unalterable Purpose to punish.

Upon the whole then, *Moses* foretells the Dispersion of the *Jews*, if they persisted in their Sins. He mentions not the *Romans*; and he, who knew the Perverseness of the *Jews*, might without the *highest Degree of Prophecy*, foretel their Sufferings. And if this be admitted as a good Proof that *Moses* was sent by God, we have greater Proofs from the Predictions of *Jesus*, that God sent him. For,

1st, Our Saviour's Prophecy concerning the Destruction of the Temple: *There shall not be left one Stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*, Mark xiii. 2. was exactly fulfilled. See *Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. 7. cap. 1.* though *Titus* gave positive Orders not to destroy it. See *Ibid. cap. 22. 26. 34.*

2^{dly}, *Jesus's* Prophecy concerning *Jerusalem*, *that it should be laid even to the Ground*, Luke xix. 44. *and trodden down of the Gentiles*, c. xxi. 24. was punctually fulfilled. See *Josephus. lib. vii. c. 1.*

3^{dly}, The Signs which *Jesus* foretold were to go before this Destruction are next to be considered.

1. *Many shall come in my Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.* This *Jesus* foretells, *Matt. xxiv. 5.* And *Josephus* tells, *lib. 20. cap. 2. lib. 2. cap. 23. lib. 20. cap. 6.* that many Deceivers arose who pretended to deliver the People from their Servitude.

2. *Jesus* adds, *Ye shall hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars: Nation shall rise against Nation, and Kingdom against Kingdom*, *Matt. xxiv. 6. 7.* *Josephus*

76 A DEMONSTRATION

phus tells us, (*lib. 5. c. 33.*) that there was not only War in *Judea*, but in *Italy* also.

3. Our Saviour adds, there shall be *Famines*, *Pestilences*, and *Earthquakes*, *Matt. xxiv. 7.* and so there were.

The *Famine*, which *Josephus* mentions, was the severest that ever was. See *lib. 6. c. 27. lib. 6. c. ult. lib. 7. c. 20, 21.*

For *Pestilence*, it is the Companion of *Famine*, and *Josephus* said, it accompany'd the *Famine*.

For the *Earthquake*, see *Josephus*, *lib. 4. c. 17.*

4. Our Saviour foretells also, *fearful Signs*, and *great Signs from Heaven*, *Luke xxi. 11.* and this was exactly fulfilled. See *Josephus*, *lib. 7. c. 31.* And *Tacitus* confirms what *Josephus* relates, *Evenerrant Prodigia, quæ neque Hostiis, neque votis piare fas habet Gens, superstitioni obnoxia, Religionibus adversa.*

5. Our Saviour adds, that the *Abomination of Desolation* (spoken of by *Daniel*) should stand in the *Holy Place*. And in *Luke xxi. 20.* he speaks of *Jerusalem's* being encompassed with *Armies*, as a Sign of its approaching Destruction. This was fulfilled, *Jos. lib. 6. c. 32.*

The *Abomination of Desolation* refers to *Dan. ix. 27*, who foretold the Destruction of the *Jewish Nation* by the *Romans*; *Josephus* owns no less; and *Jacchiades* interprets this Place of *Daniel* of the Destruction of the *Jews* by *Titus*. The *Abomination* here refers to the *militaria Signa*, which accompanied the *Roman Army*, and with them the *Roman Army* encompassing the City make up the *Abomination of Desolation* spoken of by *Daniel*.

The military Signs are fitly expressed by *Abomination*, as that Word fitly signifies *Idolatry*; these Signs were worshipped by the *Romans*. The *Romans* carried with them the Images of their Emperors, and worshipped them. *Titus* did afterwards

bring their military Signs into the Ruins of the Temple, and sacrificed to them there, as *Josephus* relates, *lib. 7. c. 32.*

The City is meant by the *Holy Place*, where this Abomination stood, which is expressed, as *standing where it ought not*, *Mark xiii. 14.*

6. Our Saviour foretells great *Distress* and *Wrath* upon the *Jews*, *Luke xxi. 23.* And whoever reads *Josephus*, will find this Prediction abundantly fulfilled. See *Lib. 6. cap. 37.*

7. Our Saviour goes on, *They shall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and shall be led away Captives into all Nations.* And *Josephus* tells, that the whole Number of Captives was 97000, and the Number of the Slain 110000.

8. Our Saviour foretells, that *the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World, for a Witness unto all Nations, and then shall the End come*, *Matt. xxiv. 14.* that is, before the final Destruction of the *Jews*, it should be spread over the Roman Empire at least. Now for the truth of this Particular, the Reader may see what *St. Paul* says, *Rom. i. 8. xv. 19. Col. i. 6.* and consult *Euseb. Lib. 2. cap. 3.* and *Origen* against *Celsus*, *Lib. 8.*

III. Another Reason why the *Jews* believe *Moses*, is from a certain Tradition of Matter of Fact. To this Purpose it is argued, that God so clearly revealed himself to the *Jews*, that they could not doubt of his Existence. That by the same means by which God rendered his own Existence indubitable, he rendered the Truth of the Prophecy of *Moses* so also. Hence the *Jews* were obliged to believe in God, and his Servant *Moses*.

The *Jews* that were Contemporaries with *Moses*, taught their Children his Law, and they their Children to this Day. Supposing the Truth of the Matter of Fact at first, the Tradition is *unexceptionable*, for Fathers would not deceive their Children, and

78 A DEMONSTRATION

and such a Tradition from Father to Son, is easy and worthy of Belief. Where the Tradition is from one Nation to another, Men are liable to be imposed upon. Thus the *Jew* argues: And if what he says be of any Force to gain Belief, that *Moses* was a Prophet sent by God, as much may be said to prove the divine Mission of *Jesus*.

For if God did not only render his own Existence indubitable, in the Time of *Jesus*, but by the same Means he did also confirm the divine Mission of *Jesus*: And we are obliged to believe in God, and in *Jesus*, and to instruct our Children in his holy Religion. And we may say also, that supposing the Truth of the Matter of Fact at first, our Tradition is unexceptionable: If *Jewish* Fathers may not be supposed to deceive their Children, why should *Christian* Parents be suspected. But then the Argument from Tradition is stronger on our Side: For whereas 'tis easy for Parents to deceive their Children, who are credulous, Men are generally shy of Foreigners, who attempt to introduce a new Religion, that forbid the Gratifications of their Passions.

Again: Our Tradition is confirmed by contemporary Heathens; whereas we have nothing of this Kind extant near the Times of *Moses*. If Tradition be a good Argument for *Moses* who lived above 3000 Years since, why should it not be better for *Jesus* who lived 1500 Years after him?

IV. The *Jew* believes *Moses*, because the Writings of *Moses*, which give Account of Matters of Fact, and such Matters of Fact as speak his divine Mission, are both extant and worthy of all Belief. For, as supposing the Authority of those Books, the divine Mission of *Moses* is unquestionable: So if it do appear, that those Writings ought to be credited, there can be no Reason to doubt of the divine Mission of *Moses*. The Books of *Moses* I think worthy

worthy of Belief. But this I dare say, that there is as much Reason that we should believe the four Gospels, as we can have to receive the five Books of *Moses*. The Truth of the Gospel Matter is as credible, as what is reported in the Books of *Moses*. And whatever Reason the *Jew* can give, why he believes those Books, I will give him the same, not to say greater, why he ought to believe the Gospels.

If the *Jew* believes the Books of *Moses*, because they are generally owned not only by *Jews*, but Men of another Religion; because they have received them by unquestionable Tradition; and that we have no just Reason to reject, or to suspect those Books.

I demand then why he does reject the four Gospels? To say that these Books are not owned by the *Jews*, is nothing to the Purpose, for the Question returns, Why are they not owned by them? 'tis but a poor Argument, which the *Jews* make use of, to shew that the Books of *Moses* are more credible than the Gospels, because *Mahometans*, and *Jews*, and *Christians*, own the Books of *Moses*, but the Gospels are not owned by the two former. For besides that Truth is not always owned by the greatest Multitude, 'tis certain that the *Jews* received the Books of *Moses*, before the *Christians* and *Mahometans* could own them, and would do so still, though they should reject them. Whatever other Reason therefore the *Jew* can give for believing *Moses*, 'tis certain that *this* cannot be a sufficient one.

Why then does not the *Jew* receive the four Gospels? There is as much, or more Reason, that he should receive these, as the Books of *Moses*, if we will consider the following Particulars.

1st, The Persons who wrote these Gospels, and under whose Names they do appear.

The Names of the Writers are known, and are such

80 A DEMONSTRATION

such as cannot be suspected : They wrote what they knew to be true ; *Matthew* and *John* were Companions of *Jesus*, and Eye-Witnesses of what they relate ; *Luke* and *Mark* were Companions of the Apostles, and therefore worthy of Belief. If we reject these Writers, it must be either because they were deceived themselves, or designed to deceive us. That they were deceived is incredible ; for tho' an honest Man may be deceived in Matters of Theory, yet in such Matters of Fact as they reported, they could not be deceived.

And we cannot suppose they designed to deceive us. They had no Temptation to do it ; for both *Jew* and *Gentile* was against them, and they lost every thing that was dear to them for persisting in their Relation ; in which though there be great Agreement in the main History, yet it is delivered with some Variety of Circumstances, which argue that there was no Compact among them to deceive the World. They appear not like Men of Artifice, they relate their Meanness, their Faults, and Misapprehensions ; they conceal not their Terrors, and their Ignorance, Ambition, and Incredulity ; they tell us what they heard and saw, and name Times, Places, and Persons ; and their Testimony was received by many Nations, by the most inquisitive Men, though against their worldly Interest. The Writings of *Moses* are worthy of Belief, though he wrote of some Things 2400 Years before his own Time ; but then we have greater Reason to believe those Men, who reported what they saw : *Moses* alone wrote his History, and we believe him ; but then we have greater Reason to believe the Evangelists, who were as honest Men as *Moses* was. We believe the Books of *Moses* ; and yet there have been Men, who have denied him to be the Author of them. The *Jew* after all believes him the Writer of them ; and then ought he not to believe the
Writers

Writers of the four Gospels, there being in those Writings nothing that can give us the least Suspicion, that they were not written by those Men, whose Names they bear.

2dly, The Books themselves are next to be considered.

The Books of *Moses* are venerable for their Antiquity, contain Matters of Weight, and are worthy of Belief. But then the four Gospels, tho' not so antient, contain Truths that are older than they, and more excellent. *Moses* nowhere expressly mentions a future State, the Gospels do. The Covenants of the *Jews* were topical and peculiar to them, the Laws of the Gospel are such as concern the whole Race of Mankind. Agreeably hereunto, those Books were written in *Hebrew*, a Language peculiar to the *Jews*, and not much understood; the Gospels were written in *Greek*, which was understood by all. The Gospels cast no Contempt upon *Moses*, but mention him with great Regard, they tell us that *Jesus* obey'd that Law. They are therefore not to be rejected by the *Jews* as opposite to the Law of *Moses*. For the Matter of *Polygamy* and *Divorce*, 'tis certain what *Jesus* has taught us, as it is not against *Moses's* Precept, so he hath but reduced Matrimony to the primitive Institution; and what *Moses* taught before of those Things, were *Permissions*, not *positive Precepts*. For the History in the Books of *Moses*, 'tis very considerable. He gives Account of the Creation of the World, the Deluge, of the Calling of *Abram*, his Family going into *Egypt*, their Posterity going thence, the giving of the Law, &c. But then the History of *Jesus*, of his miraculous Birth, Miracles, Doctrine, Death and Resurrection, and Promise of the Holy Ghost, does not come short of what *Moses* relates.

For the Precepts, there is no Comparison between those in the Books of *Moses*, and those in the Gos-

pels. A great Part of the former are only good, because commanded ; the latter are commanded, because they are good. The moral Part of the Law of *Moses* is taken into the Gospel, which requires a greater Degree of Sanctity, than was required by the Letter of the Law of *Moses*. With Respect to the Worship and Love of God, the Gospels require it from greater Motives than are to be found in the Law. With Respect to shewing Kindness to our *Neighbour*, the Gospel exceeds the Law of *Moses*, which commands us to esteem every Man as our *Neighbour*, to whom we are able to shew any Kindness. Forgiveness, and abstaining from Revenge, and praying for our Persecutors, are the Precepts of the Gospels ; and are from great Considerations commended to us from thence, which cannot be found in the Law ; not to say any Thing of the Contempt of the World, inward Purity of Heart, and Humility. After all the Promise of the Spirit to help, and of Heaven to reward, do enhance these Writings : Besides Provision of Pardon to every penitent Sinner ; whereas many Sins under the Law admitted of no Atonement. And lastly, this new Covenant confirmed by the Blood of *Jesus* our Mediator, whereas that of *Moses* was not confirmed by his Blood.

3. The Tradition by which these Books were convey'd to us.

The *Jews* cannot have greater Certainty that these are the Books of *Moses*, than we have that we have the four Gospels. I grant these Books of *Moses* were carefully preserved among the *Jewish* Nation : But whereas the *Jews* alone had the keeping of the Books of *Moses*, we know the Gospels were soon in the Hands of many Nations, and translated into many Languages, and therefore could not be so easily corrupted. Notwithstanding the pretended Care of the *Jews*, yet in the Days of *Josiah* there was but one Copy left of the Law, and that found by Accident ;

cident ; but the Gospels, from the early Days of Christianity, have been always extant, and in many Hands, which has rendered them impossible to be corrupted : Besides, as the *Orthodox* and *Hereticks* appealed constantly to the Scriptures, they had always such a watchful Eye upon each other, that it was impossible the Text could be corrupted on either Side.

For the various Lecti-*ons*, the *Jew* hath no Cause from them to question these four Gospels. For besides that the *Keri* and *Cetbib* of the Books of *Moses* are not thought of Moment to be objected against them, the Law of *Moses* was delivered without Points, and consequently was many times liable to different Senses, and yet we doubt not of the Authority of these Books. As for the various Lecti-*ons*, whatever the Number of them be, as they are an Argument, that these Books by frequent transcribing could not easily be lost, so it is certain, that they affect not the main Relation, or render any Article of the Christian Belief doubtful.

Upon the whole then, if we have Cause to receive the five Books of *Moses*, we have the same, not to say greater, to receive the four Gospels.

From what has been said I shall draw some useful *Corollaries*.

1st, The great Grounds which we have to believe the Christian Doctrine. They are greater than the *Jews* have for receiving the Law of *Moses*. Our Religion does not want sufficient Motives of Credibility.

2^{dly}, That the *Jewish* Infidelity is not for want of Credibility in the *Christian* Doctrine.

3^{dly}, That the Infidelity of the *Jews* to this Day is not from invincible Ignorance, but from a worse Cause.

Indeed the Case of the present *Jews* is different from their Fathers ; they, as our Saviour told them,

84 A DEMONSTRATION

had *no Cloak for their Sin*, but the present *Jews* had not such Means of Information as their Fathers had. They are prejudiced in their Infancy against the Christian Religion, and I hope God will be merciful to them. However these *Jews* might have come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and therefore their Ignorance cannot be their Excuse.

It may be objected, that the *Jews* put *Jesus* to Death through Ignorance. See *Luke* xxiii. 34. *Acts* iii. 17. xiii. 27. *1 Cor.* ii. 8. To which I answer.

I. That it must be granted, that the *Jews* who crucified *Jesus* did not believe him to be the *Messiah*, and were so far ignorant.

II. That was a culpable Ignorance, and cannot therefore be their Excuse.

Having shewn that the *Jew* has as much or more Reason to believe that *Jesus* was sent by God, as he has to believe the divine Mission of *Moses*, I proceed to inquire into the Causes of the *Jewish* Infidelity.

For it doth appear, that this is not to be imputed to our Religion, nor to invincible Ignorance; and we are therefore obliged to search into this Matter; I shall,

I. Then shew, what were the more *principal* Causes from *themselves*, upon which they were moved to reject *Jesus*.

1st, A carnal and worldly Temper. They had been allured under the *Æconomy* of *Moses* with Promises of temporal good Things, such as long Life, Victory over their Enemies, Plenty, &c. Indeed they received several Promises of a *Messias*, but then they hoped from him such good Things as this World afforded. They expected Dignities and Preferments from him; whereas *Jesus* designed by his Religion to abstract Men from the Love of this World, and to erect a spiritual Kingdom. Hence it was that they rejected and despised him and his Doctrine.

2^{dly},

2dly, Their *Malice* and *Obstinacy* disposed the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time to reject *Jesus* and his Doctrine. They did not behave so, as to shew, they were desirous to know the Truth. They either question his Miracles, see *John* ix. 9. or they impute them to the Power of the *Devil*, see *Matt.* xii. 24. or else quarrel that it was done on the Sabbath Day, see *John* v. 10. in all which Cases *Jesus* says enough to silence them, but in vain. They that cannot answer him, endeavour to take away his Life, they stone him for want of Arguments, and lay wait to entangle him in his Discourse.

This Malice appeared still fuller in the Sufferings and Death of *Jesus*: To see which, we need only read those Chapters in the Evangelists that relate the barbarous Prosecution of him, to be satisfied.

Again: Their Malice appeared not only in endeavouring what they could to hinder the Resurrection of *Jesus*, but when they could not do that, in hindering the Spreading and Belief of it.

Upon the miraculous Effusion of the Holy Ghost, their Malice appeared again, by their saying, *That these Men were full of Wine*. In a word, they maliciously resisted all the Means of Conviction; they even shut their Eyes against the Light.

3dly, Another Cause of Infidelity was their Pride. See *John* v. 44. The *Jews* were God's peculiar People and Favourites of Heaven. St. Paul reckons up several of their Privileges, *Rom.* ix. 4. upon the Score of which they were swelled with Pride, and this rendered the Doctrine of Christ ineffectual, who designed to bring his Followers to the truest Wisdom and greatest Happiness, by rendering them meek and humble, and therewithal disposed to find out the Truth.

II. There were some other Causes from themselves, which were less principal, which disposed the *Jews* to reject *Jesus*, and his Religion. And those

86 A DEMONSTRATION

were some dangerous Mistakes about Religion, and Matters relating to it. Under which Head I reckon the following Particulars.

1st, An over valuing of *Rights* and *Institutions*, with too great a neglect of moral Virtue.

When our Saviour came into the World, he taught a Religion that was plain, free from Ceremonies and outward Dress. He taught us to *worship God in Spirit and in Truth*, and did not annex the Worship of him to one certain Place; he did not clog it with Rites and Sacrifices; he did not require that Observation of certain Days, and Distinction of Meats: And hence it was that they quarrelled with him, and rejected this Doctrine. If he did a good Work, then they objected against him, that he did it on the Sabbath Day. They quarrelled with him, because his Followers *washed not their Hands*; tho' they neglected their Parents, and did those Things which indeed *defiled the Man*. They laid great Stress upon *little Things*, and passed over the *weightier Matters of the Law*; and they contended for Circumcision, but neglected the *Circumcision of the Heart*. Hence it was that they opposed the Christian Religion.

2dly, A Belief that they were obliged to give an implicit Belief to their Superiors, disposed the *Jews* to reject *Jesus*.

The *Jews* were mightily devoted to their wise Men; and indeed there was Care taken (*Deut. xvii. 8.*) that the Determination of their Judges should not be despised; but this Provision did not suppose those Judges infallible. Besides the Question here is of Matters of Faith: Every Man is here to account for himself. *Jesus* tells us, if the *Blind lead the Blind, they shall both fall into the Ditch*. The *Jews* on the other Hand erroneously thought themselves bound to believe with their Elders; and rejected *Jesus* and his Doctrine, because they did so.
And

And this is the Case of the present *Jews*, who obstinately adhere to the Sentence of their Forefathers.

3dly, Too great an Opinion of their traditional or oral Law, instead of adhering to that which was written, as they ought to have done, was another Reason of their rejecting *Jesus*.

Our Saviour appeals upon all Occasions to what is written, and lets the *Jews* know how vain they were in urging *Traditions*, see *Matt.* xv. 3. xxiii. 16. xv. 9. And no Wonder that they were not convinced by the written Word of God, who had set up another Rule which God never made. Such Men will think themselves obliged to believe as their Church believes; and when it is come to that, no Wonder that he who *believes* with the Church, will err with it too.

These were the Causes of the *Jewish* Infidelity, upon which,

III. God abandoned them, and their Hearts were hardened: And this was a *judicial Hardness* for their former Wickedness. For whatever the Scripture may seem to impute to God in this Matter, we are sure of this, that God is the Author of no Man's Sin, nor can he be said to harden any Man or People, in any Sense that is derogatory to his Holiness and Justice. This *Infidelity* of the *Jews* was foretold, and it was owing to their own Wickedness; God offered to heal them, and they would not; see *Matt.* xiii. 14, 15. and therefore God can in no other Sense be said to harden them, than as he leaves them to that Blindness and Hardness, which they by their Sins had brought upon themselves.

IV. I add, that since they cease to be God's People, they have been deprived for their Sins of the Helps and Means of bringing them to the Knowledge of the Truth. There hath not been that Care

88 A DEMONSTRATION

used for their Conversion which there ought to have been. The first Preachers of Christianity endeavoured to bring them to the Truth. They worked Miracles, they led exemplary Lives, and preached frequently upon the Argument contested between them and the *Christians*. But afterwards the *Jews* were destitute of that Care, and those Advantages of better Information; nor was this all. For

V. The after *Christians* laid many Stumbling-Blocks in their Way.

1st, The wicked *Lives* of *Christians* hath tended very much to the hardening the *Jews*.

2^{dly}, By our weak Arguments against the *Jews* we tempt them to continue in their Unbelief. 'Tis certain that both some of the *ancient* and *modern Christians* have defended their own Doctrines, and disputed against the *Jews*, with such weak Arguments, that they have hardened the *Jews*, and given a Blow to their own Cause. They have misapplied Scriptures, and told idle Tales of the *Jews*, and too often persecuted them, when they ought to have convinced them.

3^{dly}, Many *Doctrines* and undue *Practices* continue in the *Christian Church* which are a *Scandal*, and *Rock of Offence* to the *Jews*. For they are so very unreasonable and absurd, that wherever these prevail, as they do in the *Roman Church*, there can be no Hopes of bringing the *Jews* to the *Christian Faith*.

4^{thly}, Another Stumbling-Block which we *Christians* have laid in their Way is, the Contentions and Wars among us, and the several *Sects*, and *Factions*, and *Schisms*, that have divided the *Christian Church*.

For our *Wars*, it must be owned, 'tis a *Reproach* upon us, but still not to be imputed to our Religion.

For our *Sects* and *Schisms*, it must be confessed the Charge is too true; but 'tis certain, that it is not

our Religion that divides us, but our Departure from it: But this ought to be no Objection against us, because the *Jews* during the standing of the Temple had their Sectaries too; and to this Day they have their *Karaïtes*, as well as their *Misnical*, and traditional *Jews*.

There are other great Obstacles at this Time, which render their *Conversion* very doubtful: As

1st, That *Christians* do not do what ought to be done for their *Conversion*. They too often treat them with great Inhumanity, and condemn them as Men not worthy their Notice. We have wanted that Compassion for their Souls which we ought to have had, and not treated them with due Tenderness. Besides this, we have neglected and ridiculed the *Hebrew* Tongue; whereas nothing could be more useful to us than a great Skill, not only in the *Biblical Hebrew*, but the *Rabbinical* and *Talmudical* also, to enable us to convince the *Jews*, and to turn their own Weapons against them.

2^{dly}, 'Tis very certain that the *Jews* are very careful in the Education of their Children: They teach them early to read the Law, and imbibe in them the strongest Prejudices against *Christians* and their *Religion*. Of how great Moment this is to secure them in their Obstinacy and Incredulity is very obvious.

3^{dly}, Another Account to be given of the *Jewish* Obstinacy in refusing the Profession of Christianity is this: They do not only call those who embrace *Christianity*, *Apostates*, but are wont to follow them with the most direful Execrations: Which tend very much to the keeping their People from becoming *Christians*. (*Vide Tractat. impres. Isnæ A. D. 1542. per Paul. Fagium.*)

Lastly, The Insincerity and wicked Practices of those who from being *Jews* have turned *Christians*, have been a great Obstacle to the Conversion of the *Jews*.

Having

Having shewn that the *four* Gospels are as worthy of Belief as the five Books of *Moses*; it follows from thence, that the *Jew*, who believes the Writings of *Moses*, hath as great, I need not say greater Reason, to believe these Writings also. But because 'tis otherwise in Fact, I shall make a more particular Search after the *Reasons* of it.

Their Objections to these Books are reducible to these following Heads.

I. That the History of the four Gospels is inconsistent with itself, or with the Notoriety of Matter of Fact.

II. That the History of the four Gospels is inconsistent with the Law of *Moses*.

III. Other Things are alledged out of the Gospels, as inconsistent with the common Belief of *Christians*.

IV. The four Evangelists are charged with misquoting and misapplying the Testimonies which they produce out of the Old Testament.

I. The History of the four Gospels is charged, as inconsistent with itself, or with the Notoriety of Matter of Fact.

The Instances of which are,

1st. *Mark* ii. 13, 14. concerning the *Fig-tree*. If *Jesus* had been a divine Person, (*R. Isaac* says, *lib. 2. cap. 30.*) he would never have expected to have found Fruit, much less have cursed the Tree for having none, when it is said, *The Time of Figs was not yet.*

To this I answer,

1. That *Jesus* expecting Fruit where he found none, is no Proof that he was not a divine Person.

2. That if *Jesus* cursed the *Fig-tree* without Cause, the *Jews* ought not to affirm, much less object it against him. It was without Fruit, and therefore unprofitable: And it was in the Highway, see *Matt.* xxi. 19. and so had no Proprietor.

tor. The other Miracles of *Jesus* were generally Acts of Goodness; whereas those of *Moses*, so many Plagues.

3. Those Words, for *The Time of Figs was not yet*, may be so explained, as to remove the Force of this Objection. By the *Time of Figs*, may be understood the *Time of gathering them*: And then those Words for *the Time of Figs was not yet*, refer not to those Words immediately foregoing, but to those before, where 'tis said, that *Jesus* seeing a *Fig-Tree*, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; and he might reasonably expect Fruit as well as Leaves, because the *Time of gathering Figs* was not yet come.

Here is nothing forced in this Interpretation. *Καὶρὸς σύνων*, is the *Time of gathering Figs*. Thus *ὁ Καὶρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*, *Matt. xxi. 34.* signifies the *Time of gathering Fruit*. This, *Mark xii. 2.* is called the *Time*. See also *Luke xx. 10. Numb. xiii. 20.*

There is no Reason any one should object against connecting these Words, *For the Time of Figs was not yet*, with those that tell us, *Jesus* came expecting Figs, and not with those immediately preceding them. *St. Mark* does give us an Example of like Nature. Speaking of those who came to the Sepulchre of *Jesus*, he says, *They said among themselves, who shall roll us away the Stone?* It follows, *and when they looked they saw the Stone was rolled away*; and after this 'tis added, *For it was very great*. Where it is manifest that those Words, *For it was very great*, are not to be connected to those which go immediately before them, but to these, *who shall roll us away the Stone*.

This Passage is by the Greek and Latin Fathers applied, in a mystical Sense, to the Jewish Synagogue, and Pharisaical Traditions, and the Unprofitableness of their legal Observances: *Jesus* was ready

92 A DEMONSTRATION

dy to suffer, and he might think fit by this Miracle to confirm his Followers against that Time of Trial. And moreover, 'tis probable, that the cursing the Fig-Tree was *Ænigmatical*, and that it signified the approaching Malediction and Rejection of the *Jewish* Nation.

However, its being taken in a *mystical* Sense does not at all destroy the *literal*. And this will appear by a Principle owned by the *Jews*, who think a *literal* and *mystical* Sense consistent with each other. The History of the Creation is expounded mystically by the *Jews*; but yet the Facts, as related by *Moses*, are not therefore called in Question.

3. Again, *Jesus* prays for his *Crucifiers*. (*Luke* xxiii. 34.) This Text, *R. Isaac* says, (*lib. ii. c. 40.*) would alone destroy the whole Christian Religion. And thus he argues: If the *Jews*, as we *Christians* say, suffer great Miseries for putting *Jesus* to Death, then God did not hear the Prayer of *Jesus* for them. If God did hear the Prayer of *Jesus* for them, then we ought not to impute the Calamities of the *Jews* to their crucifying *Jesus*. To say that *Jesus* was not heard, is to disbelieve *Jesus* his own Words. *Father, I thank thee, that thou bearest me; and I knew that thou bearest me always.* And *Christians* expect great Benefits from his Intercession. (See *John* xvi. 23. 26.)

In Answer to which, I desire the following *Particulars* may be considered.

1. That we grant the Prayer of *Jesus* was heard, and yet that the *Jews* are justly charged with crucifying him, and may suffer justly for that Sin. Could the *Jew* have proved, that the Prayer of *Jesus* was not heard, it would be something; but there's no Proof of that; we know many of the *Jews* were after this received into *Christ's* Church, and pardoned; nor have we any Cause to think, that any of them, for whom *Jesus* prays, were forgotten.

2. It

2. It is to be considered for *whom* *Jesus* prays, viz. for those who had a hand in his Sufferings, and were ignorantly in the Fact, those *who knew not what they did*. But it does not follow therefore, that the present *Jews* do so also: Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the Prayers of *Jesus*, which prevailed for those who sinned ignorantly, should also prevail for their stubborn Posterity, who reject him wilfully, and therefore justly suffer for their Sin.

3. Though God does hear the Intercession of *Jesus* for his Followers, yet those who reject his Doctrine, after all the Means that God has given them to convince them, have no Help from hence. And the Places alledged are therefore nothing to the Purpose for which they are produced.

4. It does not appear, that *Jesus* prayed for the Nation of the *Jews*, but for the Soldiers, who executed the Sentence of *Pilate*; and if this be evident, as it is, the whole Objection falls to the Ground. And that the Prayer for them was heard, appears by their being brought to a right Faith. Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching *Jesus*, saw the Earthquake, and those Things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God. Here we see the Soldiers brought to a right Faith. And St. *John* tells us, *whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*.

4thly, Again they object, that the History of Christ's Resurrection is so delivered by the four Evangelists, as renders the Relation justly to be suspected.

Two Things are objected to this Purpose.

1st, The different Relation of the Time when the Women came to the Sepulchre. St. *Matthew* hath it, as it began to dawn; St. *Mark*, at the rising of the Sun; St. *Luke*, very early in the Morning; St. *John*, early, when it was yet dark.

2dly, 'Tis

94 A DEMONSTRATION

2dly, 'Tis objected, that whereas *Matthew* and *Mark* mention *one* Man, or Angel; *Luke* and *John* mention *two*.

In answer to the *first*, I offer the following Particulars to be considered.

1. I will not take any Advantage of any various Readings, but take the Relation as it lies in our present Copies.

2. It hath been said by some, that the Women went to the Sepulchre *twice*; and if this be admitted, this will remove the whole Difficulty; but I shall take it for granted, that the four Evangelists speak of one and the same Thing.

3. What Difficulty there is in this Matter, is owing to the Reader's confounding those things which are distinguished by the Evangelists. For as to this Relation, there are *three* Things mentioned, viz. the Women's buying of Spices, their setting forth from the City, and their coming to the Sepulchre; and each of these had its distinct Time allotted to it.

1st, *The buying of Spices*. These they bought, *St. Mark* tells us, *when the Sabbath was past*; some Time before they set out from the City.

2dly, *The Time of their setting forth*, *St. Matthew* tells us, was *in the End of the Sabbath*. And this will appear, by comparing this Place with the parallel Place in *St. Mark*; there *St. Mark*, relating the Time when the Women bought Spices, tells us, it was *when the Sabbath was past*: *St. Matthew* goes on to describe the Time more precisely, *as it began to dawn towards the first Day of the Week*. Indeed *St. John* says, it was *early, when it was yet dark*. And this agrees with *St. Matthew*, for it may well be said to be *yet dark*, when it does but begin to dawn.

3dly, *The Time of their Arrival* at the Sepulchre. It was convenient that they who were to be Witnesses of the Resurrection of *Jesus*, should have a clear Light

to distinguish Things. And St. Mark expressly tells us, that they came to the Sepulchre at the Rising of the Sun.

For the other Part of the Observation, that two of the Evangelists mention *two* Angels, or two Men, the other *one* Angel, or one Man, this does not lessen the Credit of the Relation : Because as they were Angels or Messengers from God, so they appeared in human Shape ; and one Evangelist calls them what they *really* were, the other what they *appeared* to be ; and both one and the other are justified by the Old Testament, see Gen. xviii. 2. where we read of *three Men*, who are called, Chap. xix. 1. *Angels* ; at the 10th Verse, they are again called *Men* ; and at the 15th Verse, stiled Angels again.

2. That one Evangelist should mention *one*, and another *two*, hath nothing strange in it. 'Twas not necessary that each Evangelist should relate every Particular, 'tis enough that they speak not inconsistently. There were *three* Angels appeared to *Abraham*, and yet he speaks to them as *one*, Gen. xviii. 3, 4. Two appeared to *Lot*, and yet he speaks as to *one*, Chap. xix. 18, 19. And why should it seem strange, that when there were *two* at our Lord's Resurrection, two of the Evangelists should only mention *one* ?

3. The Reason why these two Evangelists mention only *one*, seems to be this, because but *one Angel* spake, tho' in the Name of both.

To what hath been said, I may add, that such Objections as these are too trifling to weaken our Belief of *Christianity*, and to make Profelytes to *Judaism*. For,

I. There are greater Difficulties in the *Old Testament* in those Relations of Matters of Fact, which are reported in the Books thereof ; and yet we and the *Jews* think we have good Cause to receive them.

II. As

96 A DEMONSTRATION

II. As the Evangelists agree in the main, so this Variety, by which they express themselves, strengthens our Faith; because it is a Proof, that these Men did not agree to put off a Lie upon the World: If they designed that, they would have avoided this Variety of Relation.

III. The above-named Objections are so slight, that R. *Isaac*, who went thro' the New Testament to raise Objections, when he came to those Chapters which relate the Resurrection of *Jesus*, makes none of those Objections against the Relation; which he would have done, had there been any thing of Moment in them, that would have lessened the Credit of that Account, which is given of the Resurrection of *Jesus*.

5thly, Once more 'tis pretended, that those Words, (*John xi. 20.*) *forty and six Years was this Temple in building*, is inconsistent with Matter of Fact. For this Temple was that which *Herod* built, who reigned but *thirty seven Years*, and the Temple he built was finished in *eight years*, as *Joseph Ben Gorion* testifies.

To which I answer,

1. That neither *Jesus* or the Evangelists affirm any Thing here, as to the *forty and six Years*. *John* tells us what the *Jews* said to our Saviour; and if they said what was not true, why should the Reporter of Matter of Fact lose any Credit by it.

2. I answer; The Objector does not give us any Ground to believe the Words themselves contain any such gross Untruth. 'Tis certain, that the *Jews* own but *two* Temples to have been built at this Time, when these Words were spoken, that of *Solomon*, and a second after the Captivity. Whatever *Herod* built, was not owned to be a third Temple. Of this second Temple the *Jews* must be understood here; and tho' I am not obliged to prove that the second Temple was forty-six Years in building, yet 'tis

is evident, that if it did not take up all that Space, and that what the *Jews* say be an Error, yet 'tis not palpable one; much less to be imputed to the *Evangelist*.

3. Whatever *Herod* built, had, when these Words were spoken, been begun forty-six Years. This Work, *Josephus* tells us, *Lib. 15. cap. 14.* he began in the eighteenth Year of his Reign; and tho' he advanced it much, yet it does not appear from the same Historian, that it was finished till the Reign of *Nero*, See *Lib. xx. cap. 8.* And tho' *Herod* spent eight Years in this great Work, yet there were many Additions made to it many Years after. *Herod* died 37 Years after he was declared King by the *Romans*. From his Beginning to build his Death, were 19 Years. From his Death, to the 30th Year of *Jesus*, when he entered on his publick Ministry, were 27 Years: In all forty-six Years. And this Account is enough to satisfy the *Jews*, much more the *Evangelists*; and sure it ought to satisfy the Objectors.

Nor is the Testimony of *Josephus* invalidated by what he says in another Place, That *Herod* did this Work in the 15th Year of his Reign: For he explains himself in another Place, where he tells (*Lib. cap. 21.*) us, That *Herod* reigned from the time he overcame *Antigonus*, 34 Years; but from the Time that he was declared King by the *Romans*, 15 Years. According to which Account, the 15th Year of his Reign, from the Death of *Antigonus*, is the same with the 18th, from his being declared King by the *Romans*.

I add, that the word *οικοδομήθη* in *St. John*, does not imply that the whole Building was finished. That very word is used in *Ezra*, v. 16. Since that time untill now the House of God *οικοδομήθη* & *ἐτελείθη* hath been in Building, and yet is not finished.

VOL. I.

H

II. That

98 A DEMONSTRATION

II. That the *History* of the four *Gospels* is inconsistent with the Law of *Moses*.

1st, Under this Head, 'tis said, that whereas *Moses* commands to swear by the Name of God, *Deut. vi. 13.* *Jesus* says to his *Followers*, *swear not at all*, *Matt. v. 34.* To which I answer,

1st, That *Jesus* does not absolutely forbid all *swearing*; but only those *Forms*, which the *Jews* had taken up, of swearing by the Creature, and all needless and common Use of swearing. And when he forbids the swearing by any Creature, he is so far from destroying any Precept of *Moses*, that he teacheth the very same Doctrine which the *Jews* do. See *H. Shervuoth, cap. 11.*

2. The Sense of the Law of *Moses*, *Thou shalt swear by his Name*, can be no more than this, that when they did or were obliged to swear, they should do it only by the Name of God. And if this be the Sense, as 'tis clear it is, then our Saviour's Words are so far from destroying this Precept, that they tend directly to establish it; for he forbids swearing by any Creature whatsoever.

2dly, Again: *Jesus* calls the loving one another a new Commandment; whereas in the Law of *Moses* it is expressly required, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*, *Levit. xix. 18.* as is acknowledged by *St. Matt. (xix 19. xxiii. 39.)* To which may be added that of *St. John*, who very much pressed this Love to one another, expressly says, that 'tis not a new Commandment, but that which we had from the Beginning, (*1 John ii. 7. iii. 11. 2 John ver. 6.*) not to say that *Polygamy* and *Divorces*, which were allowed by *Moses*, are forbid by *Jesus*. To which answer,

1st, That the *Jews* were very narrow in their Notion of Neighbour: For by Neighbour they meant no more but a *Jew* or *Proselyte*, at farthest: Whereas the Religion of *Jesus* commanding us to love

upon every Man as our Neighbour, to whom we can do a kind Office, this Precept may be called a *new Commandment*, as it takes in *new Objects* which the *Jewish Law* did not extend to.

2. The *Measure* of their Love to their Neighbours under the Law, was that *they loved them as themselves*. Our Lord's Measure is higher; 'tis as *he have loved you*: So that as the Precept extends to more *Objects*, so it requires a greater *Degree*, than that the Letter of the Law of *Moses* required. *Jesus* laid down his Life for us, when *we were yet sinners*; and therefore we ought to do it for our enemies. From this Example we are to love one another.

3dly, As to St. *John*; it was not a *new Commandment* at that Time when he wrote. As the Precept of Love was old, so they had been taught the Degree of it, from the *Beginning of Christianity*; or to no more than that, the Expression amounts to. Chap. ii. 24.

4thly, For what may be said as to *Polygamy* and *Arbitrary Divorces*, they ought not to be produced on this Occasion.

For *Divorces*, they were only permitted, but not commanded; and for *Polygamy*, 'twas not commanded by any Law, however it were suffered. And *Jesus* refers us to the *first Institution of Marriage* upon this Occasion. He reverses no Precept of *Moses*; he only requires his Followers not to use Liberty, which was only permitted to the *Jews* for the Hardness of their Hearts.

III. 'Tis objected, that some Things are alledged out of the Gospels as inconsistent with the common Belief of Christians. As,

1st, Matt. i. 25. *And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son; and he called his name Jesus.*

This Text compared with others, the *Jews* affirm,

100 A DEMONSTRATION

firm, destroys the Belief of the present and ancient Christians, who believe the *perpetual Virginity* of the *Mother of Jesus*. *Jesus* is called the first-born of his Mother, which supposeth she had some other; and *Joseph* is said not to have *known her* till she had brought forth her *first-born*; which seems to intimate, that he knew her *afterwards*. Besides, we read of the *Brethren of Jesus*. (Matt. xii. 46.)

To which I answer,

When 'tis said, that *Joseph knew her not till she*, &c. the Words do not imply *he knew her afterwards*. And the best Way to judge of this Matter, is to consider the particular Way of Speaking used by the sacred Writers of the Old, as well as New Testament; and then we shall find, that this, *until she had brought forth*, is no Argument against the *perpetual Virginity* of the *Mother of Jesus*. God makes a Promise to *Jacob*, saying, *I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of*, Gen. xxviii. 15. No Man ought to conclude from thence, that he would leave him afterwards. To the same Purpose other Places may be produced. And 'tis plain, that the Design of the *Evangelists* is to shew, that *Jesus* was born of a *Virgin*.

That *Jesus* is called the *first-born*, is no Argument against the *perpetual Virginity* of the *blest Virgin*, not tho' we should allow him to be called her *first-born*, which yet there is no need we should allow from the *Greek Text* of this Place. The true Notion of *first-born* among the ancient *Hebrews* is this; whatever first opened the Womb, whether another followed or not, was the *first born* in the Sense of the *Law of Moses*. (See *Exod. xiii. 2.*) Now in case *that* only could have been called the *first-born*, which had been followed by an after Birth, the *Jew* might have evaded the Force of this Law, and delay'd the bringing the *first-born* or the Price thereof to the Priest, under Pretence

expecting another Birth : Whereas the first-born of Mankind was due at a Month old ; and the Jews were warned not to delay Payment. (*Exod.* xxii. 29, 30. xxxiv. 19.) And Jesus was presented to the Lord, (*Luke* ii. 23.) in Conformity to this Law of the Jews.

Nor is it any Objection against the perpetual Virginitv of the *Virgin Mary*, that we read of the Brethren of Jesus ; for in the Style of the sacred Writers, those are called *Brethren*, who are a-kin. *Gen.* xii. 5. with *Chap.* xiii. 8. xxix. 12, with *Ver.* 5. *Levit.* x. 4.)

It is true indeed, the Mother of Jesus is named, and his Brethren are named to be James and Joseph ; but yet 'tis evident, that Mary the Mother of James and Joseph, was not Mary the Mother of Jesus ; but the other Mary, as she is sometimes called, the Sister of our Lord's Mother, and Wife of Cleopas. See *John* xix. 25. *Matt.* xxvii. 56. *Mark* xv. 40. *Matt.* xxviii. 1.)

2dly, Again: *Matt.* xix. 17. is alledged as inconsistent with that Belief, that Christians profess to have of the Divinity of Christ.

1st, And he said unto him, why callest thou me good ? From these Words it is insinuated, that Jesus seems to reprove the Man who calls him good Master, and to own at least that he was not God, to whom the Title of good did solely belong.

To which I answer,

1. That it does not appear that Jesus reproves him for calling him good. The Reading which we follow will not justify such an Inference. But then there is another ancient Reading that takes away all pretence for such an Inference, *Why callest thou me good ? Quid me interrogas de bono ?* According to this Version, the Words do not reflect upon the young Man's Compellation, good Master, but upon that Part of his Question, *What good Things shall I do ?*

102 A DEMONSTRATION

do? [*Vide Simon. Hist. Crit. D. Text. de N. Test.*
p. 409. & D. Mill in locum.]

2. Allowing our present Reading, 'twill not serve the Purpose of the *Jew*. For as *Jesus* does not exclude himself from being *good*, so he does not from being *God*. He does not deny himself to be *God* in this Place: Nor did he, when he had the fairest Opportunity of doing it, when after his Resurrection, *Thomas* said unto him, *my Lord and my God*. Our Saviour directed the young Man, who enquired after Happiness, to *God*, who alone is originally, and immutably *good*, and can only make us happy.

2. Again: *Matt. xx. 23. But to sit on my right Hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

These Words are urged as an Argument by the *Jewish* Writers, that *Jesus* was not *one* with the Father, who could not grant this Request.

To which I answer,

1. That it is certain that Christ had Power to confer Dignities; what *St. Paul* attributes to the Father as to this Matter, he attributes the same to the *Son*. See *1 Cor. xii. 28.* compare with *Eph. iv. 8. 11.*

2. Nor does *Jesus* here deny his Power in distributing Dignities, tho' he affirms that this Honour shall be given to none, but such as the *Father* designates it for. In which he refers the glory of the whole Dispensation to the *Father*, and at the same Time declares his own Concurrence with the *Father*.

3. Again: These Words, *viz. And he could there do no mighty Work*, is brought as an Argument to impugn his Divinity.

To which I reply,

1. That *Jesus* did no more mighty Works there not for want of Power, but *because of their Unbelief*.

He thought not fit to work Miracles, where there was no hope of the Faith of them.

But what we translate, *could not*, the *Arabic* Version renders by *he did not*. And in *St. Matthew*'tis said, *And he did not many mighty Works there, because of their Unbelief.* xiii. 58. and this is agreeable to the *Hebrew* way of speaking, who say, that *cannot* be, which *shall not*, or ought not to be. Thus we read, *Deut.* xii. 17. Thou canst not eat within thy Gates the Tithe. i. e. *Thou mayst not*, as we turn it.

4. Again *Mark* xiii. 32. *But of that Day, and that Hour, knoweth no Man; no not the Angels, which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* This Text is brought by the *Jews* to impugn the Divinity of *Jesus*. For if he knows not Futurities, how could he be God? To answer which Objection, I offer the following Particulars.

1. That we Christians do believe not only that Christ was *God*, but also that he was a *perfect Man*, of a *reasonable Soul*, and *human Flesh* subsisting. We do believe that he had a *Body*, like one of ours, and that he had an *human Soul* of the same Nature and Kind with *ours*, though free from original *Sin*, and that as he increased in Stature in the *Body*, so he increased in *Wisdom* by degrees, as we do. This being agreed,

2. It must be granted, that as *Man* he was of a finite understanding. That,

3. Therefore Christ, with Respect to his human Nature, may be said not to know the precise Time of some future Events.

4. 'Tis to be observed, that the Evangelists do not say, *of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, neither the Son of God; but the Son only*. So it is not said, that the Son of God *increased in Wisdom and Stature*, which would have sounded harsh, but that *Jesus increased in Wisdom, &c.* that it might appear an increase relating altogether to the *human Nature*.

104 A DEMONSTRATION

Lastly, Those Words (*Matt. xii. 40.*) are urged as inconsistent with the Account given by *Christians* of the *Time* between the *Death* and *Resurrection* of *Jesus* from the Dead. For as *Jonas* was *three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly*, so shall the *Son of Man* be *three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth*. Here the *Jews* pretend that these Words were not verified, *Jesus* not lying two whole Days and Nights.

But this ought not to be any Objection to any honest *Jew*. For,

1. 'Tis a received Maxim among the *Jews*, that any Part of the natural Day is to be accounted for the whole; that one Day of the Month for the whole Month; and one Month for the whole Year. See *Seder. Olam. cap. 4. p. 1.* If this be so, then might *Jesus* be truly said to be *three natural Days* in the Heart of the Earth, if he were there any Part of these three Days.

Indeed, after *three Days*, *Jesus* says he will rise again. But this Expression does not infer that the three Days shall be fully expired. *Moses* requires the Reading of the Law at the end of every seven Years. But this was not to be done after the Expiration of the seventh Year, but in the seventh Year. But besides this, our Saviour's Words after *three Days*, are explained by *St. Mark ix. 31.* by the *third Day*. Moreover the Enemies of *Jesus* understood, by what he had said, that he would rise after *three Days*; that he would rise the *third Day* as appears from these Words of *Pilate*, command therefore that the Sepulchre be made sure until the *third Day*, lest his Disciples come by Night and steal him away.

IV. The four Evangelists are charged with misquoting and misapplying the Testimonies, which they produce out of the Old Testament.

1st, *Matt. xi. 23.* And he came and dwelt in a City called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was

was spoken by the Prophets, he shall be called a Nazarene.

Here the *Jews* accuse the Evangelist of quoting the Prophets for what they never said, there being no Prophet who affirms that the *Messias* should be called a *Nazarene*. This I own is a great Difficulty; for the clearing up of which, I shall premise,

1. That the Evangelist does not quote any particular Prophet for these Words, as he does in other Cases. But if the *Sense* of what the Evangelist affirms here, be found in the Old Testament, it is enough to justify him against the *Jews*, and all others.

2. That Expression, *he shall be called a Nazarene*, imports no more than this, that he shall be one. The *Hebrews* express *Word* and *Thing* by the same Word. Thus the Name of God among them, is all one with *God himself*, and the *Names* are all one with *Persons*. Thus, *Mine House shall be called an House of Prayer*, i. e. *It shall be an House of Prayer*; and so here, he shall be called, that is, he shall be a *Nazarene*. So that if the *Messias* were to be a *Nazarene*, and *Jesus* were so, what was either predicted or typified of the *Messias*, may be said to be then fulfilled, when it received an Accomplishment in our *Jesus*.

3. The Evangelist only says it was *spoken* by the Prophets, he does not say it was *written* by them. And if we suppose that there were among the ancient Prophets, a Belief that the *Messias* should be a *Nazarene*, and that this was delivered down by Tradition, the Evangelist might truly say, that this was *spoken* by the Prophets, tho' no mention was made of it in their Writings.

We may very well admit that some Things in the New Testament are mentioned, which are not mentioned in the Old, but were received by *Tradition*. Thus the Apostle says, 1 *Tim.* iii. 8. as *Jannes* and *Jambres*

106 A DEMONSTRATION

Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth. This is not mentioned in the History of *Moses*, or in the Old Testament, and yet the *Jews* do not deny there were such Men, and we find them expressly mentioned in the Targum or *Chaldee Paraphrase* of *Jonathan*, upon *Exod. vii. 11.*

Having premised these Things toward abating the Difficulty of the Text, I will now proceed further to clear it. If it appear that the *Messias* was to be a *Nazarene*, whatever the Sense of the Word be, and that *Jesus* was such a one, the *Jews* will have no Cause to find Fault with the Evangelist for these Words, altho' it should be granted, that his Dwelling at *Nazareth* was not the main *Design* of those Predictions of the *Messias*, but only an *Occasion*, upon which these Predictions were generally owned to belong to him. He was to be really all that which the Word *Nazarene* imports; and his dwelling at *Nazareth* gave an Occasion of the more publick Notice and Acknowledgment, that he was so.

I proceed to shew that the *Messias* was to be a *Nazarene*, in whatever Sense that Word is to be understood.

1st, Supposing this Word, which is here rendered *Nazarene*, to come from the *Hebrew* word *Netzer*, which signifies a Branch, we shall find the *Messias* so called by the Prophet (*Isa. ii. 1.*) The *Messias* is elsewhere called, though by a different Word in the *Hebrew* Text of that Place, a *righteous Branch*. (*Jer. xxiii. 5.*) Where instead of *Branch*, the *Chaldee* Paraphrast hath the Word *Messias*, or *Christ*. Now when *Jesus* went to dwell in *Nazareth*, he gave Occasion for his being a-new called the *Branch*, the very Name of that Place carrying a very near Cognation to *Netzer*, by which we find the *Messias* called in the Prophet.

2^{dly}, Supposing the Word translated *Nazarene*

to proceed from the *Hebrew Word Nazir*, which signifies a *Nazarite*, or a *separate Person*, this Sense agrees very well, both with what is said of the *Messias*, and what was verified in our *Jesus*. If by a *separate Person* we mean such a one as *Joseph* was, who is said to be *separate from his Brethren*, and was by them despised, rejected and betrayed, this was evidently fulfilled in our *Jesus*. Nay his very going to dwell at *Nazareth* was one Occasion of his being condemned and despised. (See *John* i. 46. vii. 52.)

Or if by a *separate Person* be meant one that was separate from the Follies, Vanities, and the Crimes of the rest of Mankind, as this was foretold of the *Messias*, so it was fulfilled in our *Jesus*. It cannot be denied, that the most holy and separate Persons in the Old Testament, viz. the *Highb-Priest*, *David*, the *Nazarites* under the Law of *Moses*, and *Joseph*, who was *separate* from his Brethren, were *Types* of the *Messias*. And these were so like *Jesus*, that to him that duly considers things, they will appear to be very eminent *Types* of him.

Joseph was a *Nazarene*, as the Word may denote a *separate Person*: And though he was not under a *Nazarite's Vow*, yet as he was *separate from his Brethren*, he is called a *Nazarite* in a more general Signification of the Word. And there is a very singular Correspondence between him and *Jesus*. *Joseph* was the beloved Son of his Father, so was *Jesus*. *Joseph* was hated by his Brethren, so *Jesus* came unto his own, and his own received him not. If the Sun, Moon, and Stars did Obeisance to *Joseph* in a Figure, they did it to *Jesus* without a Trope. Come let us kill him, was the Language both of *Joseph's* Brethren, and of *Jesus*. They were both sold for Money. The bloody Coat of *Joseph* answers to the Blood of *Jesus*; they were both numbered with *Transgressors*. If *Joseph* exhorts his Brethren to

108 A DEMONSTRATION

to Peace, so does Jesus. If they bowed the Knee to Joseph, every Knee must bow to Jesus. If Joseph was highly exalted upon his Sufferings, so was Jesus.

Sampson was a Nazarite and a perpetual one, and a Type of Jesus. He was born of a barren Woman, Jesus of a Virgin. The Tidings of Sampson's Birth was told his Mother by an Angel; so was the Birth of Jesus. He shall be a Nazarite, says the Angel of Sampson; and of Jesus 'tis said, he shall be called a Nazarene. Of Sampson the Angel says, he should deliver Israel; of Jesus, that he should save his People. An Angel was sent to satisfy both Manaoh and Joseph. If the Spirit of God moved Sampson, that Spirit descended upon Jesus. If Sampson married a Philistine, Jesus espoused the Gentiles. As Sampson at his Death destroyed his Enemies, so did Jesus. He overcame the Devil, and the World by his Death, and raised himself from Death to Life, and broke the Bands of Death.

Samuel was also a Nazarite, the Son of a barren Woman, an only Son; he was a Priest, a Prophet, and a Judge, and upon these Accounts a fit Type of Christ.

2dly, Again: (Matt. v. 43.) *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy.* Here the Jews charge Jesus with falsifying the Law of Moses, by saying, that by that Law they were to hate their Enemies, when on the contrary they were commanded to shew Kindness to them. (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.)

To which I answer,

1. That if these Words, *hate thine Enemy*, be not to be found in the Law of Moses, the Sense of them is; and that is enough to justify Jesus. See Exod. xxxiv. 12. 16. Deut. vii. 23. Deut. xxv. 17. 19. with Exod. xvii. from which Places 'tis evident, that Jesus said with great Truth, that it hath been said, *hate thine Enemy.*

2. When

2. When the *Jews* pretended they were obliged by their Law to shew Kindness to their Enemies, it was only to one of their own *Nation*, or Religion, to an *Israelite*, or *Profelyte* at farthest. Compare *Exod. xxiii. 4.* with *Deut. xxii. 1.*

3. The Practice of the *Jews* confirms us in the Sense of their Law. They would not shew the Way to a Foreigner, nor pay him the commonest Civility, which is due to human Nature.

And if these Things be considered, our Lord cannot be charged with any Shadow of Reason, for these Words of his, which are perfectly agreeable to the Law and Practice of the *Jews*.

3dly, Again: *John vii. 38. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his Belly shall flow Rivers of living Water.*

To this the *Jew* objects, that the Scripture nowhere affirms this.

But I answer,

1. That those Words, *as the Scripture hath said*, need not refer to what follows, but to the Words immediately going before them, *q. d.* He that believes on me as the Scripture requires and directs him. See *Theophylact. in locum.* And if this be so, all the Force of the Objection is removed, and the marginal Citation (*Deut. xviii. 15.*) justified.

2. Supposing those Words to refer to the following, yet there is no Cause why *Jesus* should be charged with quoting Scripture which is no where to be found, because *Jesus* speaks of the great Assistance of the Holy Ghost, (*Ver. 39.*) and that is not only well compared to Water, but promised in the Days of the Messias under that *Idea.* See *Isa. xlv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.* with *John iii. 5. ix. 10. 14.*)

4thly, Again: *John xix. 28. And after this Jesus knowing that all Things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said I thirst.* Tho' the Scripture nowhere foretells that the *Messias*

110 A DEMONSTRATION

*fi*as should say, *I thirst*: Yet 'tis enough that this Thirst at that Time gave an Occasion to the fulfilling a Prediction, which we find, *Psal. lxxix. 21. in my Thirst they gave me Vinegar to drink*, which was done to *Jesus*; and therefore, unless the *Jew* proves that the Words in the *Psalmist* can have no Reference to the *Messias*, he does nothing.

5thly, Once more, *John xix. 36. For these Things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a Bone of him shall not be broken*. The *Jew* may pretend there is no such Prediction in the Old Testament. But to say nothing of the *Paschal Lamb*, where there was a Provision made by the Law, that *a Bone of it should not be broken*, *Exod. xii. 46*. The Scripture is exprefs: The *Psalmist* speaking of God's special Providence over the Righteous, adds, *He keepeth all his Bones, not one of them is broken*, *Psal. xxxiv. 20*. and to this the Evangelist seems to refer. Nor is he to blame for applying those Words to *Jesus* in whom they received so very remarkable a Completion; nor are we obliged to maintain, that the *Psal*m is to be understood of the *Messias*; 'tis enough that what God promiseth there to the Righteous in general, was particularly fulfilled in *Jesus*.

1st, The four Evangelists are charged that they quote *falsly*, and with Mistake, *Mark ii. 26. In the Days of Abiathar the High-Priest*. Here the Evangelist is accused for affirming *David* to have done that in the Days of *Abiathar*, which appears to have been done in the Days of *Abimelech*, (*1 Sam. xxi. 1.*) whose Son *Abiathar* was, See *1 Sam. xxii. 20*.

But to this I answer,

1. That 'tis plain that *Abiathar* both lived at that Time, and knew very well what *David* had done, and what followed upon it; and *that* might truly be said to be done in the Days of *Abiathar the High-Priest*, which was done in the Days of *Abiathar*, tho' before he was *High-Priest*. 2. There

2. There is an Opinion, that this *Abiathar*, the Son of *Abimelech*, was called also *Abimelech*, and once *Abimelech* (1 Chron. xviii. 16.) as also that his Father was called both *Abiathar*, and also *Abimelech*. If this be true, the Difficulty is removed; and there is good Ground to believe it. For *Zadock* and *Abimelech* are said to be Priests (and that *Abimelech* is called the Son of *Abiathar*) in *David's* Reign, and after the Death of *Saul*, (2 Sam. viii. 17. compare 1 Chron. xviii. 16.) and whoever will compare these Places, and consider the Time to which they refer, will not see Cause to reject this Opinion.

3. The Greek Text is here to be considered: What we render in the Days of *Abiathar*, is ἐν τῷ Ἀβιάθαρ Ἀρχιερεὺς, i. e. about, or before *Abiathar's* being High-Priest. The Particle ἐν signifies sometimes not the present Time, but that Time which soon after succeeds it. And the Latin *sub*, by which the *Vulgar* renders this Greek Particle, hath the same Signification.

4. By the Word, which we render *High-Priest*, the Writers of the New Testament do not only mean him that was strictly so called among the *Jews*, who was but one at one Time, but the more eminent Men of that Order. See *Selden de Success. Pontif. lib. 1. cap. 12.*

The Book of *Sipbra*, an ancient Book among the *Jews*, says, that the High-Priest's Son may be said to be an *High-Priest*. And that the High-Priest's Son, who is deputed by his Father in his Stead, is said to be an *High-Priest*, and consequently *Abiathar* might well be called *High-Priest* in the Time of his Father.

2. Again: *Matt. xxv. 32. From the Blood of righteous Abel, unto the Blood of Zacharias the Son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the Altar.* Here says the *Jew*, is a manifest Error, because that *Zacharias* that was slain, was the Son of

112 A DEMONSTRATION

of *Jehoiadab* ; as appears from 2 *Chron.* xxiv. 20,
21. But I answer,

1. That the *Jew* hath no Reason to lay any Stress upon this Objection ; not only because many such Pretences might be brought against the Writers of the Old Testament, which yet are not able to destroy their Authority ; but besides that, for any thing they can tell to the contrary, the same Man might be called by two Names, that of *Jehoiadab* and *Barachias* ; for nothing was more common among the *Jews* than this. (*Vide Selden de success. Pontif. lib. 1. c. 5.*)

Besides *Barachias* and *Jehoiadab* import the same Thing ; for *praise God* is but the *English* of one and the other, and both import the same thing as *Elia-kim* and *Jehoiakim* do, which were the Names of the same Person. (See 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 4.) If the *Jew* urge that it appeareth not that *Jehoiadab* was called *Barachias* ; I answer, that 'tis enough that the contrary does not appear ; for that should have appeared before they could justly have charged the Evangelist with an Error.

But St. *Jerom* tells us, in *Matt.* xxiii. that in the *Hebrew* Copy of St. *Matthew*, which the *Nazarenes* used, it is *Jehoiada*, where we now read *Barachias*, therefore this Objection can have no Force against the *Original*, and very small against the *Greek* Version, because the *Hebrew* Word *Barachias* is of the same Signification with *Jehoiadab*.

2. The *Jew* is not certain but the Evangelist might refer to some other *Zacharias*, who was the Son of *Barachias*, though the History is not transmitted to us. And 'tis likely he did. For when our Saviour began so high as *Abel*, and charges the then *Jews* with killing him, 'tis likely he should go lower than *Zacharias*, the Son of *Jehoiadab*, who was slain eight hundred Years before *Jesus* lived, and mean some Person of that Name who was slain at the Expiration of the *Jewish* State.

3. *Josephus* (*De Bell. Jud. lib. 4. c. 18.*) mentions another *Zecharias*. This answers to *Abel* slain from the beginning. He was the Son of *Baruch* also, and slain in the Temple. And then the Words of *Jesus* are *proleptical*, and are a Prophecy of what was shortly to be done; and only expressed, as such Predictions frequently are, in the old Prophets, as if the Thing had already come to pass. And if the Words of *Jesus* refer to this Person, they are so far from being an Objection against the Gospel, that they confirm it.

3dly, Again: (*Matt. xxvii. 9.*) *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet.*

St. Matthew is here accused for citing *Jeremy*, when he ought to have cited *Zechary*.

To this I answer,

1st, That 'tis not evident, that *St. Matthew* did cite *Jeremy*. 'Tis certain that the *Syriac* and *Persic* Versions have no Name, but barely mention the Prophet; and some Copies read not *Jeremy*, but only the Prophet.

2dly, Supposing *St. Matthew* to have quoted *Jeremy*, yet is it no Imputation upon his Credit. For *Jeremy* might be the Author of some of those Chapters which now go under the Name of *Zechary*, or what appears to us. That these Words were written in some apocryphal Book of *Jeremy* seems credible from what *St. Jerom* affirms. He tells us, we read the very Words in an apocryphal Work of *Jeremy*.

3. That *Jeremy* wrote the ix. x. xi. xii. xiii. and v. Chapters in *Zechary* is very probable. 'Tis certain that such Things are contained in those Chapters as agree with the Time of *Jeremy*, and not of *Zechary*. e. g. That the Pride of *Assyria* shall be brought down, and the Scepter of *Egypt* depart, is foretold, *Zech. x. 11.* which was then past; and though *Jeremy* might foretel this, *Zechary* could

114 A DEMONSTRATION

not. What is said of the Cities of the *Philistines* (*Zech. ix. 5.*) agrees well with what *Jeremy* says (*xxv. 20.*) But what is said of *Gaza* (*Zech. ix. 5.*) cannot be said by *Zechary*, but agrees well with the Time of *Jeremy*. For *Gaza* was smitten before *Zechary's* Time. The same may be said of *Asbekela* (*Zech. ix. 5.*) which was destroy'd long before *Zechary's* Time.

Lastly, The four Evangelists are charged with quoting Places nothing to the Purpose. (*Matt. i. 15.*) *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.* These Words will require a farther Consideration; for besides that it is not said by what Prophet these Words are spoken, it's hard to conceive how these Words, which were meant of *Israel*, can be said to be fulfilled in *Jesus*; and that what was said of *Israel* of old, should upon what happened to *Jesus*, be said to be fulfilled; and this should be said to *come to pass*, that *that might be fulfilled* which was fulfilled long before.

1st, I grant that it is not said by what Prophet but we have the express Words in the Prophet *Hosea, xi. 1.* And the Evangelist reports them, as they lie there in the *Hebrew* Text, not as they are turned by the *Greek* Interpreters.

2^{dly}, I am to shew how these Words, which were evidently spoken of *Israel*, can be applied unto *Jesus*. For the removing this Difficulty,

1. It is granted by the *Jews*, that the Old Testament is full of Mysteries, and Insinuations of some what farther than what the Letter of the Text, or first Intention of the Institution, or Thing mentioned does amount to. And they take Liberty to expound their Law accordingly. And if the Christians affirm, that the Old Testament was full of Shadows, they say no more than the *Jews*.

2. There being many Types as well as Prophecies

the *Messias*, those Passages of the Old Testament may truly be said to be fulfilled in the *Messias*, which were compleated in him, as in their Antitype, though they were such Things as were before done the *Type*. There are *some* Things said in the Old Testament of the *Messias* so immediately, that they belong to none else: There are *other* Things that have a literal Sense *first*, and *then* a spiritual Meaning and Reference to the *Messias*. And that Scripture is fulfilled in *Christ*, which did refer to him, as well as that which only belonged to him, and to none other.

3. *Israel*, of whom these Words were spoken by the Prophet, was a *Type* of *Christ*, and therefore this Scripture may truly be said to be *now* fulfilled, which yet, in the Letter, was in *Israel* verified long before. And that *Israel* was a *Type* of *Christ* is evident to any one that compares together what happened to each of them.

Egypt was a Refuge to *Israel*, and *Christ*, both went thither, and both returned. *Christ* was the Son of God, so was *Israel* too. (*Exod.* iv. 22.) It was by Means of *Joseph* that *Israel* went into *Egypt*, it was another *Joseph* that carried *Christ* thither. The *Messias* was God's anointed, so was *Israel* also. *Christ* was driven from his own Country, and 'tis said of *Israel*, that *they went from one Nation to another*. They were both preserved in *Egypt*. *Israel* was kept alive, when the first-born was slain; and *Christ* is preserved in the same Place, whilst the Babes were killed. *Israel* left *Egypt* upon the Death of the one, *Christ* soon after the Death of the other. *Israel's Afflictions in Egypt* St. Paul calls (*Heb.* xi. 26.) the *Afflictions of Christ*; for they fulfil him in the *Type*.

2dly, Again: (*Matt.* ii. 17, 18.) *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying, Ramah was there a Voice heard, Lamentation,*

116 A DEMONSTRATION

and Weeping, and great Mourning, Rachel weeping for her Children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

The Jews object against the Evangelist for misapplying this Place of *Jeremy*, which they say has no Relation to the slaying of the Children of *Bethlehem* in *Judah*, but to those who were led away captive, as is evident, (*Jer.* xxxi. 16, 17.) where a Promise is made of their Return. And why, say they, should *Rachel* be said to weep for her Children, when the Children of *Bethlehem* were not her's, but *Leah's*? The Words in the Prophet they say, refer to the Captivity of the *ten Tribes* who are called *Ephraim*; because *Jeroboam* their first King was of that Tribe. Agreeably hereunto it follows in the Prophet, *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.* (Ver. 18.) In answer to this Difficulty,

1. I do grant that these Words in *Jeremy* do belong to another Matter; but it does not follow that the Evangelist is guilty of Fraud, when he applies these Words to the *Lamentation* that was made upon Account of the *Innocents*, that were slain at *Bethlehem*.

2. *Rachel* may well enough be brought in Weeping upon this Occasion, by Way of a *Prophopœia*; nothing being more common than for Writers to bring in a Person speaking, who is not really any individual Person concerned in the Matter. Thus *Ephraim* in that very Chapter is brought in bemoaning himself. Why *Rachel* is brought in here Weeping, and not *Leah*, may be, because *Rachel* was known to be very fond of Children, and as for that Reason, she was fitly made Use of by the Prophet to represent tender Mothers, so she is by the Evangelist also.

But besides this, I may add, that the Tribe of *Judah* and *Benjamin* bordered on each other, and

he is sometimes taken in as Part of the other. If *Bethlehem* were in *Judah*, *Ramah* was in *Benjamin*, and very near *Bethlehem*. The Slaughter of the Infants was not restrained to *Bethlehem*, but extended to the Coasts thereof; and then the Voice might be heard in *Ramah*, and *Rachel* might be truly said to weep for her Children.

But *Rachel* was buried in *Bethlehem*; the *Bethlehemites* were descended from her Husband, and from her own Sister; and therefore the *Jews* have no Reason to quarrel with the Evangelist when he speaks after the Manner of their Law.

Supposing that *Jeremy* speaks of *Captives*, and the Evangelist applies the Words to them that were in, all that the Text says, is this, that *they are*; which is a general Expression, and is comparable to them that were *Captives*, and to them that are dead.

3. It is very reasonable that we grant a *second* sense to many Places in the Old Testament, and when they happen to arrive to the verifying of that sense, then they may be said to be accomplished and fulfilled. No Man can deny the Words of the Prophet to belong at first to another Matter: They are then *literally* fulfilled; but yet notwithstanding they may *a-new* be farther fulfilled, and receive their final Accomplishment.

The Reason of Things is one and the same, nor is there any thing more steady than that is; and where the first Reason of an Institution, or of Names of Persons hath continued, there have been up afterwards some new Reasons of the same Institutions or Names. Thus the *Sabbath* Day was appointed at first for a Memorial of the Creation; afterwards it was required as a Memorial of the deliverance out of *Egypt*. *Beersheba* had its Name from the Oath that was made there, and from the seven Ewe Lambs also. *Sheba* signifying both an

118 A DEMONSTRATION

Oath and *seven*; this may account for the Likeness of Things in the Old and New Testament.

4. We have still a greater Reason to believe those Words of *Jeremy* to be rightly apply'd by the Evangelist, because they are found in that very Chapter, where the Prophet prophesies of the *Messiah*. *Jer. xxxi. 22. The Lord hath created a new Thing in the Earth, a Woman shall compass a Man*, meaning his *miraculous Birth*: And soon after, *Vers. 31. he mentions the new Covenant* which God would enter into. This manifestly belongs to the Days of the *Messias*, and is applied to that Purpose, *Hab. viii. 8.*

Lastly, It is to be considered, that the Scripture may be said to be fulfilled several Ways, either *literally*; or when what was fulfilled in the *Type*, is fulfilled again in the *Antitype*; or else by Way of *Accommodation*, as when a like Event happens to any Place or People, to what fell out some Time before. The Sorrow that now fell upon the Coasts of *Babylon* and *Ramah* was very grievous, and like that which is reported to have befallen those Places by *Jeremy* upon another Occasion; and then those Words are made Use of by Way of *Allusion*, to express this Sorrow by. The Evangelist does not say, *That it might be fulfilled*; but *then was fulfilled*. *q. d.* Such another Scene of Sorrow appeared there upon the Murder of the *Innocents*, as was that which *Jeremy* mentions upon another Occasion. This Way of speaking is used in the New Testament. What *Isaiab* says of the *Hypocrites* of his Time, (*Isa. xxix. 13.*) is applied by *Jesus* to those who were like them, *Matt. xv. 7, 8.* They were *Hypocrites* like those in the Prophet's Time; and therefore the Words of the Prophet are accommodated to them. Compare *Matt. xiii. 14.* with *Isa. vi. 9.* compare *Matt. xiii. 34, 35.* with *Psal. lxxviii. 2.* *Matt. xiii. 13.* with *Jer. vii. 11.* and this is a Liberty to be allowed.

wed to, and taken by all Writers. St. Matthew as a *Hebrew*, and 'tis believed that he wrote his Gospel in *Hebrew*, and for the Use of the *Hebrews*. and he must be a Stranger to the *Hebrew* Writers, that does not know that nothing is more common among them than such Accommodations of the text; and therefore the *Jews* have no Cause to object against the Evangelist on this Account: And this, which I have said in the last Place, I take to be alone a full Answer to the Objection of the *Jews*.

7021

Bishop *WILLIAMS*'s

BOYLE's LECTURES

ON

REVELATION

ABRIDG'D.

William W. Phelps

ROYAL LECTURES

ON

REVELATION

ABRIDGED

Bishop *WILLIAMS's*
BOYLE's LECTURES
ON
REVELATION.

HEB. i. 1, 2.

*God who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners,
spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets,
hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.*

IN these Words we have,
I. A Description given of Revelation. *God's
speaking to the Fathers.*

II. The Certainty of it. *At sundry Times,
and in divers Manners.*

III. The Order observed in delivering it.

IV. The Perfection and Completion of it. *God
hath in these last Days spoken by his Son.*

Under the first of these I shall shew,

1. What we mean by Revelation.
2. The Possibility of it.
3. The Expediency, Usefulness, and Necessity
of it, with respect to the Circumstances Mankind
are in.

Under the second I shall shew,

1. That as it's possible for God to reveal him-
self, so God has actually revealed himself.
2. I shall consider the Difference between a real
and pretended Revelation, and how we may distin-
guish them.
3. I shall shew, that the Scriptures of the Old
and

124 On R E V E L A T I O N.

and New Testament contain Matter of divine Revelation, and have upon them the Characters belonging to it.

Under the third,

1. I shall consider the several Ways by which God did reveal himself.

2. I shall shew the Difference between divine Inspirations and diabolical Illusions, natural Impressions and delusory Imaginations.

3. I shall consider the several Periods before the Law, under the Law, and under the Gospel.

4. I shall consider why God did thus gradually proceed in revealing his Will to Mankind.

Under the fourth,

I shall shew the Perfection of the Gospel Revelation, and that there shall not be any other.

I. I am to begin with Revelation.

1. Where I am to consider what we mean by Revelation.

Revelation in the first Notion is the making known something which before was a *Secret*.

In a *religious* Use of the Word it is God's making known himself, or his Will, above what he has done by the Light of Nature.

Here we may observe,

1. There are Things knowable by the Light of Nature, without Revelation; of this Kind is the Knowledge of God from the Creation of the World. (*Rom. i. 20.*)

2. There are Things of pure and simple Revelation, that are not knowable by the Light of Nature; of this Sort is the Salvation of the World by Jesus Christ. *Eph. iii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. i. 12.*

3. There are Things partly of Nature, and partly of Revelation, discoverable by the Light of Nature but imperfectly; of this Sort are a *Future State, and eternal Rewards and Punishments.*

II. I will shew the Possibility of a Revelation.

1. If

On REVELATION. 125

1. If one Man can discover his Mind to another, it is certain the Creator may reveal his Will to Men.

2. If such Things be declared, which none but God could reveal, as *Prophecies*; and such Things done, which none but God, in Man, could do, viz. *Miracles*, it is evident there is such a Thing as Revelation.

3. If this be questioned, it must be from this; either that God cannot impart such a Revelation to Man; or Man is incapable to receive it.

But as God made the Soul of Man, he must have Power to operate upon it as he pleases. And there can be no Incapacity in Man; when as to the *Matter*, he can both receive it, and deliver it as received; and as to the *Manner*, it's in a Way suitable to his Faculties, which is so as the other may understand.

III. I am to consider the Expediency, Usefulness, and Necessity of Revelation.

Now Revelation, as has been shewn, is an extraordinary Means, and therefore when God makes Use of it for the Information of Mankind, it shews, that there is something extraordinary, that makes it expedient and necessary. As it was with *Adam* at his first Creation; who unless he had been informed by immediate Inspiration, what was necessary for him to know, as *God, himself*, and the *World*, must have been full of Confusion and Amazement.

After the Fall Revelation was absolutely necessary, to comfort *Adam* under the Sense of his Apostacy; to prevent his Despair; to fortify him against the Power of his Enemy; and to caution him against the sad Effects of his Depravation; and for preventing his Presumption. And for these Reasons God gave a new Revelation of himself, to instruct him in the Design he had of restoring him to Favour, and the Method he would observe for that Purpose. *Gen. iii. 15.* This

This was the Case of *Adam*, and the Exigence he would have been in, without this immediate Revelation.

But had this Revelation died with *Adam*, the Condition of his Posterity would have been worse than his. For besides the State of Guilt, which must have invaded them, as it did him, and what Conscience in them could no more quietly digest, than in him; they laboured under Disadvantages, he did not: For he being created at full Age, he was free from all Prepossessions of Sense and Education. But his Posterity growing up from their Infancy among sensible Objects, must have gradually received their Information from them, and by slow Degrees from *visible* Things, must have argued themselves into the Belief of Things *invisible*. In such Danger would the fundamental Principle of natural Religion have been, if there had been no Revelation to prevent it. And this was the Reason why God inspired *Abel*, and *Enoch*, and *Noah*, to preserve those Principles alive. And if, when there was a Revelation seconded by the Authority of such eminent Persons, the World so soon grew corrupted, what would it not have been, if there had been no such Revelation? And this the World was soon sensible of after the Flood, when for want of a Revelation, the Notion of God, and the Principles of natural Religion were quite lost. Of which Darkness and Confusion in Matters of the greatest Importance the Heathen World were sensible.

1. They complained of the insufficiency of all their Principles to give them tolerable Satisfaction.

2. There was nothing they more desired than a Revelation; and when they were made to believe that something was a Revelation, they chose to do the most shocking Things, *viz.* to kill their own Children, &c. rather than not be obedient to divine Revelation. Now what could this Infatuation proceed

ceed from, but a Consciousness of their standing in Need of some higher Principle to direct them, than the Light of Nature?

3. There was no Nation without a Revelation, that is, without some Pretence to it. The Use I make of all this is to shew, what a Sense Mankind had of a Revelation, and what all the World has thought expedient, if not necessary; which was the Thing to be proved.

II. I proceed now to prove the *Certainty* of Revelation.

Under which I shall shew,

I. That there has been a divine Revelation.

II. The Difference between pretended and real Revelation.

III. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain such a Revelation.

I. That there has been a divine Revelation.

The Arguments for which I shall place under four Heads.

1. A rational, or moral Evidence.

2. A natural.

3. Testimony, or traditionary Evidence.

4. A supernatural.

1. Moral: I take for granted I have proved that a divine Revelation is expedient, &c. and upon that Supposition shall attempt to prove the *Certainty* of it.

I own, where the Necessity is created by our own Fault, there lies no Obligation upon the Creator to provide a Remedy; and since the Necessity Mankind is now in, proceeded from their Apostacy, that Necessity can in Reason be no just Plea for it, nor a sufficient Excuse in the Want of it. When Man was created in such a State as made Revelation a necessary Help to his Reason, God immediately afforded him one. But when he forfeited that divine Gift, he could have no Claim to it: But considering the miserable Circumstances Mankind were in
after

after the Fall through a Want of a Revelation, we may reasonably conclude, that the Goodness of God would incline him to give it. For if the Designs of God in the Redemption of the World had not been known for 4000 Years, Men would not have been the better; so that if there had been no Promise upon Record, that the *Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head*, yet we might have been sure, there was some such Revelation made to *Adam*; some Promise of Forgiveness to him and Mankind, as there was a Design to redeem them; it being as necessary toward their present Comfort to have a Revelation of that Mercy in their Redemption, as Redemption itself was necessary toward their Happiness. But

Further: The Sense that all Men have had of a Want of a Revelation, and their impatient Desire to attain it, being a Desire becoming human Nature, make it necessarily be concluded, that the same divine Power that made Man a reasonable and inquisitive Being, has also provided for that noble Desire of knowing what the Will of his Maker is, and what relates to his own eternal Welfare, and that is by a Revelation; for whatever Sense Men, that have only Reason for their Guide, may have of the Mercy and Goodness of God; whatever they may observe in the Course of his Providence, to confirm them in the Belief of it; whatever Hopes they may have of it, from the general Notion of the divine Nature; whatever Desire of it from a Sense of their own Misery, yet they want that Evidence of it, which can alone satisfy them, and that is *Certainty*, or which is the same, *Revelation*, by which that *Certainty* is to be attained; and therefore we have a just Reason to believe it was not wanting to the first Ages of the World.

If it be objected, that supposing there was once a Revelation, what was that to those Ages that after-

afterwards wanted it. I answer that, as the making known the Revelation, was an Act of Grace in God, the Preservation of it belongs to Men, and if it is lost thro' Negligence or Perverseness, it is their Faults, and God is not to be charged with it.

Thus it is with Reason, which if not duly nurtured, may degenerate into Stupidity, and a Kind of Brutality, as it has happened in some Nations in the *Southern* Parts of *Africa*, *West-Tartary*, and *West-Indies*. And it is in the Case before us; for as God had made a special Revelation of himself to *Adam* after, as well as before the Fall, so he took the most effectual Way for the Conveyance and Preservation of it, by the Longævity of those Patriarchs, with whom it was deposited, especially when the Things revealed were of Importance enough to oblige all Men; and therefore if Men did not take care to preserve such a Revelation, it was their own Fault, and wholly chargeable upon themselves.

Having considered the Case of those who had not, or have no Revelation; I return to shew that there has been such a Revelation, and that brings me to the *second* Sort of Proof, which I call *natural*, and they are *Speech* and *common Notions*.

1. *Speech*. For which, tho' there is in Man a Capacity, and Organs admirably contrived, yet in the Case of *Adam* there was a Necessity of his being immediately instructed by God; because it is impossible he should have invented Speech and Words to be spoken so soon as his Necessities required: it must have been a Work of Time before *Eve* and he could have understood one another, or conversed comfortably together; and therefore it was necessary that God should give them a Speech, that they might be meet Helps for each other.

2. *Common Notions* is another Proof of a Revelation.

130 On REVELATION.

That Mankind do agree in some Notions, viz. the *Belief of a God*: The *essential Difference* between *Good* and *Evil*, is evident.

It is also as undeniable, That these Notions are so early to be discovered, and do so grow up with our Reason, that they seem to be antecedent to it. And accordingly, as we have a Notion, so a Sense of those Things, antecedent to all Reason, and Instruction, which we call Conscience *excusing*, or *else*, accusing as the Thing be *good* or *bad*. Now as the Nature of the Things must be before our Conception of them, so both must be before we pass this practical Judgment upon them. And if we do exercise this Faculty antecedent to all Instruction, then so must the Sense of the Things be, about which it is exercised. See *Rom. ii. 14*.

So that whatever Improvement these Notions may receive from an after Instruction, yet they seem to be implanted in us by the same Power that made us reasonable Creatures, who no more could leave himself without Witness in our Minds, than in the Works of Nature. And being thus antecedent to Reason, can proceed from no other Principle than Revelation doth.

3. There is a traditionary Proof of Revelation, which is by Testimony, or by such Instances, as are a Part of the Revelation; and of which no good Account can be given, if they are not allowed to be of divine Institution; in order to which,

1. I observe, that the Want of a Revelation in any particular Nation or Age, is not an Argument sufficient to prove, that there never was any Revelation. For Revelation, like Memorials or Records of other Things, may be lost through Negligence. And as the Want of these is no Proof, there never were any; so neither because the Revelation may be lost, is it a Proof that there never was any.

2. When

On REVELATION. 131

2. When I propose the Proof of a Revelation, I would not be understood so much as to suppose there was any Collection of Revelations before *Moses*, but only that there were inspired Persons, such as *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*.

3. Where there has been or is no Revelation, yet there are or have been, in those Ages or Nations, certain Footsteps of such a Revelation; as Pillars and Crosses found in a Country at present uninhabited are Proofs, that some Persons had been there.

4. I account such Usages, and Rites, and Principles, as *expiatory Sacrifices*, that have no Foundation in Reason to proceed from Revelation.

5. This is more confirmed, if such Usages have been observed in Nations, that have no Commerce or Relation one to another, for then they must arise from some common Head, from whence they were originally dispersed among the several Branches of the same Stock. Among the Instances that I shall make use of for the Proof of a Revelation, I shall begin with those that relate to divine Worship.

1. *Time*. That there is some particular Portion of Time to be set apart for the public Worship of God, either by God or Man, is necessary, when it is to be an act of a Society; for Worship, without some Time to convene, must *end in Confusion*.

And when God had finished the Work of Creation, he set apart that Day he rested upon for that Purpose; as we may see the Institution (*Gen. ii. 2.*) I call this an Institution; for when could that be more seasonably instituted, than at the close of the Creation, when the Sanctification and the Reason of it were so immediately connected: God blessed and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his Works? And if he *sanctified it* because on that Day he rested, 'tis evident the Institution did begin with the Reason of it.

And then how improbable is it, that God should

blefs and *sanctify* a particular Day, and yet for 2000 Years should leave that Day without any Distinction?

How improbable again, that it should be first instituted and made a Duty to the *Jews* only for a Reason that equally concerned all Mankind as well as them, because he *rested*; and for a Reason existent from the first, as well as in the Time when it was instituted at *Sinai*?

'Tis highly unreasonable to add one *Prolepsis* to another, when there is no Necessity for it, contrary to all Rules of a just Interpretation.

Now if this be an original Institution, we have one Instance of a divine Revelation, so far as the Scripture is of Authority. But however we are not without a concurrent Testimony from profane History. For there has been of great Antiquity such a Distribution of Time, as we call a Week of seven Days, and that the *seventh* was a religious Day. *Homer* calls it *ἡμέραν ἑβδόμην*, and many other Authors mention it. But *Callimachus*, *Homer*, and *Linus*, say it was so because all the Works of Creation were then finished.

Now there is nothing in Nature for such a Division into Weeks, and consequently if this was the Opinion of those early Times, conformable to Scripture, we have sufficient Reason to offer this as an Instance of a Revelation.

2. Another Instance of Revelation is *Sacrifices*.

Which were very ancient, particularly those of Expiation, and universally practised in all Nations. Now the Question is, Whence should this arise; was it the Invention of some eminent Persons in those early Times? Or was it from Revelation?

There seems no Reason that Men should ever think, that such a Worship should be acceptable to God. It might become wicked Spirits to be pleased with it, as the Heathens generally thought: But Men of Understanding would rather chuse a *reasonable*

able Service, the Sacrifice of Praise and Prayer; which the wiser of the Heathens did exceedingly prefer.

But if we descend to expiatory Sacrifices, who could think that the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin? Men could never be supposed to think, that the offering the Blood and burning the Flesh of a Beast to be a fit Expression of their Gratitude to Almighty God, or a Means to obtain his Favour by way of Expiation for their Sins, without his Institution. And therefore it is evident, Sacrifices were of divine Institution.

If it be demanded, why they should be commanded by God, which are unsuitable to his Nature?

I answer, they were instituted to be Types of the great Sacrifice of Christ. And therefore it is observable, that as soon as God had revealed to *Adam* his Design of pardoning his Offence, and the Means by which it was to be procured, we read in the next Chapter of their Sacrifices which they brought unto the Lord, as a Representation of what they had deserved, had not the divine Mercy interposed.

Now if this is a right Representation of an expiatory Sacrifice, we have a fair Account why it was so universally received; why it was admitted into the Law of *Moses*; why by the special Providence of God it was so much received among Mankind: By this means we have an Account why the *Gentiles* so soon received the Notion of our Saviour's Death, as an expiatory Sacrifice.

To the same Original may the First-Fruits, Priesthood, and Tents, be referred; the first of which was from *Abel*, the two last before *Moses*.

I proceed to the fourth Sort of Evidence, which is *supernatural*, and that is either itself a Revelation, or the Proof of it; of the former is *Prophecy*; of the latter, *Miracles*.

1. Prophecy, or the foretelling Things to come; whatever Time they are to exist in, whether near, or remote. Now this Knowledge can proceed from nothing less than him, who, as he knows all Things, so has all Causes in his own Power, and can foresee how they will operate, or can dispose their Operations, as he pleases, whatever the Causes be; and being thus peculiar to him, 'tis no less than a Species of divine Revelation. And therefore as none can know the Certainty of such Events, but God, so none can foretel them, but such as he reveals them to.

So that as many Prophecies as there have been, so many Evidences have we of a divine Revelation.

And this all Mankind have had a Belief of, as is manifest from the Oracles they consulted upon all emergent Occasions: Which I mention, not that I esteem them of any Authority, but to shew what the World thought of Prophecy; and which even those Philosophers that laughed at their Oracles never questioned the Truth of.

2. Another Sort of supernatural Evidence is Miracles. But of them hereafter.

Thus far have I endeavoured to shew, that there has been a Revelation antecedent to, and where there was no written Revelation.

II. I proceed to shew what are the Characters by which we may know a Revelation to be true.

In treating upon which, I shall premise.

1. That the proper Subject-matter of Revelation, being not self-evident, requires some extraneous Principles to prove it by.

For Instance, we never could have found out the Mystery of our Redemption, if God had not made it known to us. This then being the Subject of Revelation, 'tis reasonable that this Revelation should have some other Ways of Proof; that what is thus divine in its Discovery, should have a suitable Evidence to justify it.

2. The Matter of Revelation being thus of divine Inspiration and Authority, must also be worthy of God, and consequently requires a Proof suitable to the Nature and Importance of it.

3. Revelation being the Declaration of God's Will to Mankind, as he doth not require us to believe without Evidence, so it doth suppose sufficient Evidence to prove it by.

4. If there are any Things in a Revelation that contradict the true and certain Notions of Mankind concerning Good and Evil, we may be sure it is false, and not of divine Inspiration.

But tho' these Things are thus necessary to Revelation, that the Want of them is sufficient to detect what is false, yet it will not follow, that wherever these Things are, that it is therefore of divine Revelation; for it may have all these Characters, and be a Doctrine of human Invention.

And therefore there is something further requisite to the Proof of a Revelation.

Towards the clearer Proof of which, I shall

1. Consider how the Persons inspired, could be satisfied of the Truth of the Revelation.

2. How those it was revealed to, were to judge of the Truth of it.

3. What Evidence may be expected by Persons who lived in Ages remote from that of the inspired Persons, and after the Revelation was compleated.

1. I shall consider how the Persons inspired were to be satisfied of the Truth of the Revelation.

There seems such an Affinity between *Revelation* and *Imagination*, that it is difficult to say this is of divine Inspiration, and this the Effect of Fancy; but whatever it may seem to us that have no Experience of such Representations as the Prophets had, yet we may be assured that there was in prophetical Schemes such a powerful Representation of the Part of the divine Agent, and such Clearness of Perception

tion on the Part of the Person inspired, that those inspired Persons might as well doubt they could see, as doubt of what was revealed to them.

To deny this, is to deny that God can so communicate himself to an intelligent Creature, that the Creature shall know it proceeds from him, which I have proved to be not unreasonable.

False therefore is that Assertion, *Theol. Polit. cap. 2.* that *Revelation is uncertain without a Sign*, and therefore *Abraham, Moses, and Gideon* asked a Sign besides the Revelation. For those Persons did not ask a *Sign*, because they doubted of the Revelation, but for the greater Confirmation of their Faith.

So that Revelation may be certain where there is no *Sign*, and a Person is obliged to believe it, as if there was.

I grant when Revelation comes at second Hand, there is Occasion for *Signs*, because Men may be so weak as to be imposed upon by their own Imagination, or be so wicked as to endeavour to impose upon others by Pretence of Revelation.

But when a Person himself receives a Revelation, there is no more need of a Sign to evidence the Truth of it, than there is to prove it to be Day when it is so.

A Sign therefore makes no Alteration in the Evidence; for whether with a Sign, or without a Sign, Revelation is to be believed; for else they that had a Revelation without a Sign, were not obliged to believe, and the Revelation without a Sign had in Effect been no Revelation; since no one is obliged to believe where there is no Reason for it, and there is no Reason for it, where there is no sufficient Evidence: So that if it be asked, how a Person shall be satisfied concerning the Certainty of a Revelation made to him? I answer, in the same Manner as he is satisfied concerning the Truth of a self-evident Proposition; which is Proof of itself.

2. But supposing the Person satisfied himself of the Revelation, yet how are those, to whom a Revelation was not revealed by God, but from the inspired Person, to judge of the Truth of that Revelation?

Why here let us place ourselves in those Circumstances, as if we were to judge of the Truth or Falshood of a Revelation; and consider what we ourselves would in Reason desire for our own Satisfaction, when the Persons, to whom this Revelation is made, stand ready to give it, and if I mistake not in judging for others, it may be resolved:

1. Into the Veracity and Credibility of the Persons pretending to Inspiration.

2. Into the subject Matter of Revelation.

3. Into the Testimony produced for it.

1. The Credibility of the Person. It is a necessary Qualification for a Prophet, that he be a good and holy Man. Indeed sometimes God did inspire such Persons as had none of these Qualifications, as *Balaam*. But in the Opinion of Mankind, Sincerity and Honesty are so requisite, that without them a Messenger from God would ordinarily have no more Reverence paid to his Errand than his Person.

So ought they to have Prudence and Understanding. And therefore God, in his Election of Persons for so peculiar a Service, doth in that Way either find or make them fit. And when he was pleased to chuse such illiterate Persons, as *Amos*, and afterwards the Apostles, he gave them a Mouth and Wisdom that none were able to resist.

Further it is required, that they be faithful and sincere, as well as wise, or they will be the more able to deceive others. And what greater Evidence of this can be desired, than that the inspired Persons lived themselves, as they persuaded others; that they denied themselves all the Pleasures of Life; that they underwent the greatest Sufferings with Cheerfulness for the Truth of their Doctrines. If

this

138 *On REVELATION.*

this is not Sincerity, nothing is: So that as far as the Wisdom, Probity, and Sincerity of Persons are a Proof of their Credibility, we have an Evidence to rest upon, and a Character to try the Truth of a Revelation by.

The second Proof, in this Case, is the Subject-Matter of Revelation. And this must be worthy of God, and conducive to the Happiness of Mankind.

1. It must be worthy of God and his Perfections; it must unravel the Mysteries of his Providence, as far as God's Government of the World, and the Condition of Mankind in it, will permit: We may expect to find in it the best Rules to inform us in what we are to know and do; such in fine as will lead us to God, make us like him, and fit us for the Enjoyment of him.

Lastly, We may expect, that Revelation will satisfy us of what Mankind would not only desire, but what is best, and most necessary to be known. And what is more necessary than to be satisfied about the *Origin* of Things? And how Mankind became corrupted? And that where there is such a clear Sense of the Difference between Good and Evil, that there should be such a Bent to Evil, that cannot be prevented? What more desirable than to know how these Inclinations may be subdued? What more agreeable than to know after all how God may be appeased? What more desirable than to know the Certainty of, and how to attain a future State?

These and the like were the Questions that the considerate Part of Mankind sought, but in vain for Satisfaction in; and therefore since Revelation is to make up the Defects of natural Light, and is as well for the Satisfaction of Mankind, as to be worthy of God, we may expect that these should be the Subjects of it.

And as far as these Characters belong to Revelation,

tion, so much Reason have we to believe the Matter of Scripture to be such, as I shall shew afterwards.

3. For the Confirmation of it, such an Attestation is required to support the Credit of the Revelation, and the Authority of the Revealer, as exceeds the Power, and is out of the Course of Nature to give; and therefore *Moses* had a Power given him by God to work Miracles, to confirm the Truth of his Revelation.

The first Thing then to be considered is, *were they true Miracles*, and that our own Senses will inform us; the next Thing is, that they were not the Effects of any natural Cause (for that would be to set Nature above itself;) and lastly, that these Miracles were performed solely for the sake of that Revelation, and to give Testimony to it. Where this is, there is an infallible Proof of the Truth of what they are Witnesses to.

Now let us lay all this together, and see what it amounts to, *viz.* the Capacity and Integrity of the inspired Persons; the Unanimity and Consent of Persons remote and distant in Time and Place; the Usefulness and Reasonableness, the Excellency, Sublimity and Perfection of the Doctrine they taught; and the Testimony given to them by such Operations as exceed the Power of created Causes; where these are concurring, we may say it is the Voice of God, and that it is his Revelation which carries the Stamp of his Authority. For God cannot be supposed to bear Witness to a Falshood, or set up a Light to deceive Men.

But supposing the Contemporaries with these inspired Persons had all these Evidences for their Satisfaction, what Evidence will be sufficient for those who lived in after Ages, and saw none of these Miracles to ground their Belief on?

I answer,

I. That

1. That if they have all the Evidence that there were Persons so inspired, that they wrought Miracles to confirm it, and wrote certain Books which record those Revelations, and Miracles, and that those Books are the same that now go under their Name, they have all the Evidence that in their Circumstances can be reasonably demanded.

2. Tho' these of After-Ages want the Evidence of those Cotemporaries of inspired Persons, they have some Advantages above them. They have lived to see the whole Scheme of Revelation completed, and at once placed in their View.

1. They can by comparing see how one Part agrees with another.

2. They can compare the Events already passed, with the Predictions, and see how they all in their Season were fulfilled.

3. They have seen the wonderful Success of the Gospel in the Verification of Prophecy.

4. They have seen the wonderful Preservation of it thro' all the various Scenes of Prosperity and Adversity.

So that we see how in every Case the Ways are chalked out for our Satisfaction in this Argument of divine Revelation, the Case of latter Ages not excepted ; and therefore that Unbelief is now as inexcusable after the Times of Revelation, as in those Times.

Having proved what are the Characters of true Revelation,

III. I am now in Order to prove that the Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testament* contain the Matter of divine Revelation, and have upon them the Characters belonging to it.

Which I will do by answering these four Questions.

1. *Quest.* How we can prove the Matter of Scripture to be true?

2. *Quest.*

2. *Quest.* How we can prove the Matter of Scripture to be of divine Revelation?

3. *Quest.* How we can prove those Books to be of divine Inspiration?

4. How we can prove these Books that are now extant, and received as Canonical, to be those Books which were in Time past wrote by divine Inspiration?

1. How we can prove the Matter of Scripture to be true?

Now Matter of Scripture is of a various Nature, such as *Morality, doctrinal Revelation, Institution, Prophecy, and History.* Of which the greatest Part will be here set aside. For the *moral* Part being no other but the dictate of Nature, needs no *Proof.* That of *Doctrine* and Institution belongs to the second Question. *Prophecy*, if not yet accomplished, is not capable of other Proof than *Revelation*; and if accomplished, it is the Proof of itself.

So that Scripture-History, which is a Relation of Matter of Fact, of what has happened for 4000 Years together, is the only remaining Part to be proved.

Under which Notion more may be said for the Truth of Scripture, than for any other History. So that, if after all that is to be suspected, we may call in Question all Matters of the like Nature.

Now of this Kind there are some Things to be found in Scripture only; in which Case we have no other Way to judge of the Truth of it, than

1. By the Credibility of the Matter therein revealed.

2. By its Self-Agreement.

3. By its Concordance with other Books of good and sufficient Authority.

And if this be made out, we have all the Evidence for the Truth of Scripture as is possible to have in our Circumstances.

1. By

I. By the Credibility of the Matter of Scripture. And here we may observe, that a great Part of the Scripture carries with it its own Evidence. Its Account of the Creation of the World ; the Formation of Man ; and the Degeneracy of human Nature was acknowledged by all.

2. The Scripture gives such an Account of the Age of the World, the Dispersion of Nations, the Variety of Languages, the Distribution of Time, &c. as have the Face of Truth, and of which no other tolerable Account can be given. And that they are true there is good Reason to conclude.

1. In *Moses's* Account of the Origin of the World there is an exact Order and Coherence ; there is a regular Relation of Persons and Things ; but in the *Egyptian*, *Chaldean*, and *Chinese* Accounts of it, it ends in Fable, and Self-Contradictions.

2. As to the Dispersion of Nations, and the Consequences of it, the Pedigree of *Moses* is justified in the Names of Places, agreeable with those of the Persons, as has been proved by *Bochart* in his *Geographia Sacra*.

3. As to the Distribution of Time, there is an orderly Progression, both with Respect to the Genealogies of Families, and the several Periods from the Creation to the Flood ; from thence to the Law at *Sinai* ; from thence to the rearing of *Solomon's* Temple ; from thence to the Captivity ; and from thence to our Saviour's Death.

Time and Place are good Characters of the Truth of any Matter of Fact, as well as good Directors ; and carry in them a great Appearance of Truth, where they are to be found. And then none can be presumed more certain than Scripture, where the Relation these had to the *Messias*, and each Person had to his Tribe, and each Tribe to its Place and Situation, made the *Jews* scrupulously exact.

There are other Things highly credible ; as the Deluge,

Deluge, and the Destruction of *Sodom*, and the providential Preservation of pious Persons, such as *Noah, Lot, Joseph, David, &c.*

But above all, God's Providence is evident in preserving the *Jews*, both in *Ægypt* and *Canaan*; and recovering so many of them out of the Captivity at *Babylon*, as to answer the End of accomplishing all the Scripture Prophecies in the Person of the Messiah, that was to descend from the Lineage of *Abraham*, the Tribe of *Judah*, and the Family of *David*.

So that as the ancient Genealogies, together with the Chronology of Scripture, were recorded to demonstrate the Beginning of the World; so the later Genealogies were preserved, to shew the World, that what was foretold 1800 Years before was fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*.

4. There are other Things that are difficult, either as to the Relations themselves, or the Manner and Circumstances of them. But as we have so great Reason to believe the Scripture's Relation of Things to be true, the Difficulties about it ought no more to derogate from its Veracity, than the Difficulties about divine Providence ought to call into Question the Truth of it, when we have in general uncontrollable Reasons to believe it.

For by this Way of proceeding the Authority of all other Books must be destroyed; and we must believe nothing but what we see, or hear; nay hardly that.

II. Another Character for the Proof of the Truth of History is the Self-Consistence and Agreement.

This is a necessary Character, and absolutely requisite to all true History; and is above all others observable in Scripture; the several Books of which, though written by different Persons, and in different Ages, yet when duly considered and compared together, have a surprizing Agreement between them, without

without any such Inconsistencies as may make its Veracity questioned.

I say, if duly considered ; because

1. I don't account those to be Inconsistencies, which in other Authors may justly be esteemed Errors of the Transcribers ; and for which no Author suffers in his Reputation.

If it be said, How does it appear, that they are the Faults of the Transcribers ?

I answer, 'tis apparently so sometimes, as may be observed in the various Readings, which could not be, were there no such Mistakes in the Transcribers.

'Tis not here necessary for me to enter upon a Debate, how far the Providence of God doth herein concern itself, in preserving the Text free from all Corruption ; I am now treating of the Truth of it separate from divine Authority. And sure the petty Errors, which in other Books are considered as venial, ought not to stab the Veracity of Scripture.

We may justly claim the same Favour as we do for any other Author's Credit, and therefore no such Arguments ought to be urged for the Invalidity of its Authority, which is not reasonable to offer against other Writings.

2. I don't account these to be Inconsistencies which do not affect the Body of the History : And therefore, when the History of *Jacob* blessing his Sons is under Consideration, whether it was, as *Gen. xlviii. 31. He bowed himself upon the Bed's Head*, or, as *Heb. xi. 21. He worshiped upon the Top of his Staff*, is not material. If indeed the Inconsistency affected the whole Body of the Relation, the Author's Fidelity might be called in Question. But that we deny, and appeal to all the various Readings on Scripture, as our Compurgators. And consequently the Scripture will so far remain a true Relator

Relator of Facts, and may compare with, and be reservedly set above all other Writings whatsoever ; in which no one Man, whose Hand passed through the whole Work, can compare with that to which so many Hands, in various Circumstances, at several Times, did so exactly agree, as if they had been wrote by one Hand, and at one Time.

III. Another Character is the Agreement of Scripture with other Authors, when such there are.

I may well say, when such there are ; since it is evident, there are no Writers so ancient as *Moses* ; and then we must rely on his Authority for what he says. But however the most antient of the Heathen Writers give a Confirmation of what he relates, tho' trapt up in Fable.

Thus if we were to read *Adam* instead of *Saturn*, instead of *Pandora*, *Eve* ; instead of the *Garden of Jupiter*, *Eden* ; instead of *Ogyges*, or *Deucalion*, *Noah*, &c. we should find more of the Truth under the Disguise of the Fable, than at first appears ; and that the *former* gave Occasion to the *latter*.

But over and above this, their gravest Writers have placed *Moses* among the chiefest Law-givers, and have not obscurely referred to his Miracles in *Egypt* and at the *Red-Sea*.

IV. When there is a Disagreement between the Scripture and other Authors, there is sufficient Reason to prefer the *former* before the *latter*, and to justify *these* by *that*.

As for the first 3000 Years, it is acknowledged to be Fable ; and who cannot see the Difference between *Saturn* and *Adam* ; between the Building of *Babel*, and the War with the Giants ; that is, between true History, and Fable ?

Who can observe the Inconsistencies and Ignorance of the *Pagan* Writers, but must give up the cause, and own, that the *one* has much the Advantage in Point of Credibility of the *other* ?

146 *On REVELATION.*

So that setting aside the divine Authority of Scripture, yet it has all the Characters of Truth which any Book or Books can pretend to.

But I shall next prove, that the Scriptures of the *Old and New Testament* are of *divine Revelation*, and have upon them the Characters belonging to it.

In which are two Things to be considered.

1. The *Matter* contained in Scripture.
2. The *Books* containing that *Matter*.

1. I am to begin with the *Matter* contained in Scripture.

Now that is of a diverse Nature, and therefore according to the Nature of it, so is its Authority. For there is Matter of Fact, and Historical Relations of Things; and when we say these are of divine Authority, we mean, they are recorded by the Command of God.

Again: There are Matters of a moral Nature; and when we say these are of divine Authority, we mean, they are authorised by God, as well as obligatory in their own Nature.

But the more especial Way was, when the Matter was purely of divine Revelation; and though this was not to be learned, and found out by Reason, yet 'tis agreeable to it; as I shall now proceed to prove.

1. I shall consider the Claim which the *Matter* of Scripture hath to Revelation and Inspiration.

2. The Characters upon which that Claim is founded.

3. The Proof by which that Claim of Revelation is made good.

1. I shall consider the Claim, &c. And

1. If that be not a divine Revelation, there is no Revelation. For as that denies and rejects all Revelation besides itself, so there is none other that can produce such Evidence for it; and consequently notwithstanding the Evidence that is not to be admitted.

mitted for divine, then there is no Revelation existent.

2. If this be not a Revelation from God, then there never has been such a Revelation; and that for the Reason before given. But if there ever had been a Revelation designed for Mankind, the same divine Goodness that gave a Revelation would certainly preserve it. But if there be no Revelation, then there never has been one; and all that has been said about the Existence, Usefulness and Necessity of a Revelation, must go for nothing.

3. If the Scripture be not of divine Revelation, then there never can be a Revelation that shall oblige us to believe it; since there can be no stronger Evidence produced for it, than for Scripture. He therefore that pretends not to believe Scripture-Revelation, for want of Evidence, cannot be convinced of the Truth of any.

Admit then that there is, or ever was, or may be a Revelation, we may be certain that the Matter contained in Scripture is of that Nature, yet it remains that we consider,

2dly, The Characters belonging to Revelation, upon which that Claim is founded.

That Revelation may be distinguished from imposture, there must be proper Characters that are essential to the Revelation; without which Marks we must either reject all, or refuse none. But as there has been a Revelation, we must follow the Direction of Scripture, which not only warns us of false Prophets, but furnishes us with such Characters as enable us to distinguish the true from the false.

And this Direction, methinks, may pass for one Character, *Every one that doth Evil, or speaketh falsely, hateth the Light, lest his Deeds should be proved, and his Pretences discovered. But he that doth and speaketh Truth cometh to the Light, that his*

148 On REVELATION.

Deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

Now when a Revelation requires you to examine itself, and lays down Rules how you may detect the true from the false, 'tis an] undoubted Sign it is able to justify itself, and can produce such Characters as will give it a Title to divine Authority. And what are such, if these be not? *viz.*

That it could come only from God.

That it is worthy of him.

And has a divine and supernatural Evidence to attest it.

Where these are, there is a divine Authority, there is a Revelation. And these I shall shew to belong to what the Scripture proposes as such.

1. That it could come only from God.

Which I shall attempt to prove, by shewing it is the Revelation of his good Will to Mankind.

Here I shall take for granted,

1. That God created Man innocent, for being infinitely Good, it is not conceivable that he made any Thing Evil in itself.

2. That Man became a sinful Creature, Experience shews.

3. That God was disposed to admit him again to Favour.

Upon this State of Things the Scripture proceeds: And because Man could not find out the Way by which he might be restored, he wanted a Revelation to inform him.

I grant that Repentance seems to be necessary to our Reconciliation; but that it is of itself sufficient has been always doubted, as is evident from the several Ways of Atonement practised in all Parts of the World. For as God is the Governour of the World, it seems not more reconcilable with his Justice to pardon all Offenders upon Repentance; than it seems consistent with the End of human Govern-

ment

ments to accept of the Offender's Penitence as a full Satisfaction to the Law. We have an Instance to the contrary, in this very Case, when notwithstanding a supposed Repentance in Mankind, God inflicted the Penalty, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die.*

Now since Repentance could not do of itself, there is something else in Reserve, but what that was God only knew.

And if we take a View of Scripture as to this Matter, it will confirm this Character of Revelation that it is from God.

The Sum of which is, that since Mankind had thus relapsed, they could do nothing that was acceptable to God. In order to their Reconciliation, it was designed that the Son of God should be their Mediator, and die for us. That accordingly, as a Proof that God accepted this Atonement, the Son rose from the Dead and ascended into Heaven to be our Intercessor; and dispenses all those Graces that are necessary to reform Mankind, and has promised to bestow them upon such as are qualified to receive them. Now who can pretend that this was to be found out by human Inquiry; or rather, that must not grant it to have proceeded from God? Especially if it be observed, what a wonderful Intermixture there is in this Scheme of the divine Mercy and Justice, of his Mercy in pardoning the Sinner, and of his Justice in requiring an Atonement; that a Representation of his Hatred of Sin on the one hand, when God established so great an Atonement, as the Blood of his own Son; and of his Love to Mankind, when he *spared not his own Son*; what a Foundation for Hope, when he accepted of the Propitiation; and what a Dread of Offending, when *he who knew no Sin was made a Sin-offering for us?*

But there is something further to prove, that this

this Scripture Revelation was from God, and that is the Prophecies that are interwoven with it, which could proceed from none but him who alone has all Causes and Events in his Power. But these are to be reserved to their proper Place.

II. A Character necessarily belonging to divine Revelation, is that it be worthy of God, that is, suitable to the Perfections of his Nature.

In discoursing upon which, it cannot be denied, but the Revelation of God to Mankind is worthy of God, tho' it be a great Condescension. It was great Condescension in God to create us, and it is no more unworthy of God to reveal himself to him, than it was to make him. For what other End was there for making such a Creature, but that he might serve his Maker? And since to know and acknowledge God is the chief End for which Man was made, it is as much becoming God to reveal himself to him, as it is for him to make him for the Knowledge of himself.

2. That is a Thing worthy of God to reveal, which is a Thing worthy of God to do: And such is the Recovery of Man to the like Condition he was created in, and unhappily fell from.

This is the Design of the Scripture Revelation, to represent and shew us the Method that God's Wisdom and Goodness thought fit to observe: So I will shew, that this Method is worthy of his Wisdom and Goodness, as it is *Cautionary, Moral, and Supernatural.*

1. *Cautionary*, is the Method God took to shew his Displeasure against Sin, and to make Mankind cautious of offending. The Means made Use of before the *Fall*, was a Threatening, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die*; but because that did not restrain Mankind, and for fear lest when God had received them into Favour, his Mercy might be abused, God added an Expiation thereunto, and

On REVELATION. 151

that to be made by his Son. By which means, as God's Mercy would be testify'd in a Design for Redeeming them, so his Justice would be exemplified, when he that had no Sin of his own, should yet be made a Sin-Offering, and suffer for them. This is the Reason of such an Institution, and both the Institution and the Reason of it are worthy of God, since there is no other Way, in which these things can be represented to greater Advantage, than by the Scripture Scheme of Man's Redemption.

2. There is a *moral* Means, which serves to the purifying and perfecting human Nature, to which Revelation gave the finishing Hand. For in the Scripture there is such an entire compleat System of all Things requisite to the Perfection of human Nature, that nothing is wanting; there we have on one hand the most enforcing Encouragements to Goodness, and the most necessary Admonitions against Sin, and both fortified with proper Examples. There we find Rules for the Regulation both of our Thoughts and Actions. There we find our Duty inforced by the Authority of God himself, whose Precepts they are declared to be, and not the mere Results of Nature and Reason.

And whereas Nature falls as short in its Sanctions, as its Authority; when these moral Principles become God's Laws, they have Rewards and Punishments as everlasting as our Souls, to bind them upon us.

So that as far as Nature thus excited can go, we have the most effectual Means in our Power to amend it.

But as we may and do prove remiss in exerting it, therefore,

3. There is the Assistance of God's holy Spirit to render the other effectual. The Morality of the Philosophers was poor to the Doctrine of our Saviour, and the Fruits of it short of their Principles.

There were few Men made better by them. But our Saviour converted Multitudes, and his Gospel became as successful in reforming, as teaching the World. And what was then done would be always done, did Men not obstruct it on their Part.

2dly, It is worthy of an infinite, good, and powerful God, to consult what may be for the Happiness of the reasonable Nature. And what can make them happy, if the Method of Salvation revealed in Scripture be not sufficient for it? Whereby we are assured, not only of God's Protection here, but of a State of Immortality hereafter.

To which I may add, it is as worthy of God to reveal the Way by which that Happiness is to be attained,

I grant, that by the Use of Reason, and the Sense we have of the Difference between Good and Evil, we may learn obscurely what is acceptable to God; but yet without Revelation we can as little know what is on our Part necessary toward the attaining that Happiness, as we do what the Condition of the future State is, and wherein the Happiness of it consists. And therefore, as far as Certainty is preferable to Hope, and Knowledge to Conjecture, so much is the Comfort of Revelation, beyond that of Nature, and so much is it becoming Almighty God, who gave us our Being, to acquaint us with what may make us happy, and lead us to it. And this the Scripture has plainly revealed.

3dly, It is a Design worthy of God, to reveal himself to the World, and give a right Notion of his Nature.

The Being, Wisdom, and Power of God are evident from the Creation; but his Mercy and Goodness are not so legible in the Frame of Nature, nor observable in the Course of his Providence as the other; we cannot conceive but that it is as be-
coming

coming our Creator to represent himself, as he has done in Scripture, to be merciful, as to be powerful and wise.

III. A divine and supernatural Evidence is a Character necessarily belonging to Revelation ; which is next to be considered.

Now there are three Instances of this Kind, *viz.* Prophecy, Miracles, and the wonderful Success of the Christian Religion.

I. Prophecy. That there has been such a Thing as Prophecy, and that it is a good Testimony to what it is given, I have already proved.

So that there is nothing remains, but to shew, that the Revelation in Scripture hath had this Testimony.

And of this there are two Sorts, *near* and *remote* ; of both which we have an Instance in the Prophet sent to Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiii. 2.

The *remote* was, that a Child, *Josiah* by Name, should about 330 Years after burn Mens Bones upon that Altar. The *near* was, that at that Time the Altar should be rent, and the Ashes poured out.

If the remote had been alone, it would have had little Influence upon them, who were most nearly concerned, and therefore there wanted some present Sign to verify it. But otherwise the remoter is stronger, because impossible to be foreseen by Men or Angels. When it depends upon voluntary Agents, and is in the Conclusion answered by a parallel Event, it is to After-Ages a certain Evidence.

To which if we add the Concurrence of *both*, when there is a Series of Prophecies *near* or *remote*, the first looking forward to others, and the latter looking back to the former, there is no reasonable Exception to be made against the Matter thus testified.

As for Instance, if there be Prophecies in several Ages,

Ages, in which it plainly appears, that a certain Person should be born, at such a Place and Time, and in a miraculous Manner, and work many Miracles; that at a certain Time he should be put to Death, and upon it, that his Nation should be destroyed, it is a Testimony not to be disproved.

And yet to pass by many Prophecies in Scripture, relating to particular Persons, I shall only take Notice of those relating to our Saviour's Person, Doctrine, Family, Works, and Death. Now,

Four thousand Years before Christ's Birth it was foretold, that *the Seed of the Woman*, that is, a Person supernaturally born, should *bruise the Serpent's Head*.

Two thousand Years after, it was told *Abraham*, that by one who should descend from him, *all the Families of the Earth should be blessed*.

Three hundred Years after it was prophesied by *Jacob*, that the *Messias* was to descend from his Son *Judah*.

About a thousand Years before our Saviour's Death, *David* was exalted to the Throne, from whose Loins the *Messias* was to spring. In whose Psalms we have the Prediction of our Saviour's Death, Resurrection, and Glorification; as to the first of these, See *Psal.* xvi. 10. xxii. 1. 7. 8. 14. 16. 18. *Psal.* c.

This is also the great Theme of *Isaiab's* Prophecy, who foretold his Death, &c. See *Isa.* xi. 10. xlii. 10. liii.

Micah v. 2. foretold the Place where he should be born, viz. *Bethlehem*.

Lastly, *Daniel*, about five hundred Years before our Lord's Birth, points out the Time and Year he should suffer in. In Consequence of which the City and Sanctuary was to be destroyed. *Dan.* ix. 24. &c.

This Conclusion leads us to the second Branch of prophetic

prophetical Observations, viz. our Saviour's own Predictions, which are many; but to pass by others, never was any Prophecy, than our Saviour's of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, more exprefs; never any Sentence more terrible, nor more punctually fulfilled. Compare *Josepb. de Bell. lib. 4, 5, 6, 7.* with our Saviour's Prophecy.

2. Another Way by which we prove the Claim that the Matter of Scripture hath to divine Authority is, *Miracles*.

Of which Kind there is nothing wanting that can reasonably be desired; and that either as to the *Judaical* or *Christian* Dispensation, which are too well known to be mentioned.

3. Another Proof of the divine Authority of the Matter of Scripture is, the *Success* correspondent to former Predictions.

Could it be thought possible, that a few simple, timorous Persons should each by himself go to Nations they knew nothing of, and should prevail with them to change their Gods and Religions, their Customs, and their Lives.

Could it be thought, that Men of no Learning could maintain and propagate a Doctrine that seemed to the sensual Inclinations of Mankind to be foolish; and that obliged them to hazard all that was dear to them in this World, for the Prospect of a Reward in another.

And yet this Doctrine, according to our Lord's Prediction became so successful, that *the Sound of it went out into all the Earth*, in less than forty Years.

Now if there had not been Truth in the Doctrine, it had not been a Doctrine worthy of God, suitable to the Desires and Expectations of Mankind; if it had not had a supernatural Assistance and Evidence, it could not in those Circumstances have made its own Way; and it must be a Revelation from

156 On REVELATION.

from God, that had all these Testimonies on its Side to confirm it. So that we may conclude, that if ever there was a Revelation, the Scripture is the Revelation.

Having proved the *Matter* contained in Scripture to have been of divine Revelation ; I proceed to answer the third Question.

How we can prove the Books of Scripture to have been of divine Inspiration ?

Where we may observe somewhat as to the *Writers* ; and then as to the *Inspiration*.

1. As to the Writers ; of whom we may reckon three Sorts.

1. Merely human. As *Luke*, who took in Hand to write the Life of Christ. And this may be done, without any material Error, by Persons well qualified.

2. Those that had what they wrote immediately dictated, or approved by inspired Persons, as St. *Mark* by St. *Peter*.

3. Such as were immediately inspired in the Writing, as St. *Peter*, and the rest of the divine Writers.

Now though the first of these may be sufficient in ordinary Cases, yet in Matters of Salvation it is necessary the Writers should be assisted by the Spirit of God, or write by the Direction of those that are inspired.

2. As to Inspiration, that is two-fold.

1. Either when the Matter, Words, or Order, are dictated by God himself.

2. Or when Persons wrote by his Command what was revealed to them as to the *Matter* only.

From hence proceed the Difference of Style and Phrase between their several Compositions. Here the Office of the Holy Spirit was to suggest the *Matter*, though he left them to their own way of expressing it.

In

On REVELATION. 157

In one or other of these two Senses, Scripture may be said to be wrote by divine Inspiration. And this I shall endeavour to prove by answering the third Question.

How we can prove the Books of Scripture, which contain the Matter of Revelation, to have been of divine Inspiration ?

In proceeding upon this, I shall premise,

1. That the proper Course for proving the divine Authority of the Scripture, is to begin with the Matter, and then proceed to the Books.

And therefore they are wrong that would disprove the Truth of the Revelation, or Matter contained in Scripture, by such Objections as they make from the Books. For the Matter stands upon a Proof of its own, and will stand, tho' the written Word should not support its Authority.

Therefore those that would disprove the Revelation, must begin with the Matter. But this we have already proved to have been of divine Inspiration.

2. Tho' the Books were not proved by Miracles, as the Matter was ; yet if we prove that the Books were written by inspired Persons, and that what they wrote is the same they taught, it is the same.

For what need was there of Miracles to prove the Books were written by Inspiration, when the Writers were inspired, and that they wrote what they taught, when confirmed by Miracles ?

Therefore while the Authors lived, there needed no Miracles to prove these Writings to be theirs : And after their Decease, we have as much Reason to believe what they wrote to have been of divine Inspiration, as what they taught to be a Revelation ; both depending now upon Testimony, as to which we have no more Proof of the Matter, than we have of the Books.

3. From hence it follows, that not to believe the
Scrip-

158 *On REVELATION.*

Scripture to have been of divine Inspiration, is in Effect to deny the Revelation therein contained : The Scripture being the best, and only means, in the present Circumstances of Mankind, left for the Conveyance of it. When indeed the inspired Persons were alive to teach and rectify Mistakes, there was no need of a written Word ; but after their Deaths, fallible Persons might mistake in their Reports of Doctrine, and the weak Memories of others, not retain what they had been taught, and the insincere would wrest what was taught to serve their wicked Designs ; therefore God that committed the divine Oracles to be taught by inspired Persons, employ'd the same to write them, for their future Preservation, and safe Conveyance to Posterity ; without which, Mankind could never have been certain what they were to believe, nor prove to others what they were obliged to believe : So that we have Reason to believe, that the same divine Goodness that made known his Will to Mankind, would take the best Means to preserve it.

And the Scripture being the only Means of that Kind, becomes a Rule of Faith ; and so is of Authority sufficient to oblige us to obey it.

If the Matter of Scripture be true, and of divine Inspiration, we are obliged by it, though the Book was of human Composition, because it is the Doctrine that passes the Obligation upon us. But when the Book also is of divine Authority, and composed by divine Inspiration, it obliges as well as the Matter.

But having asserted, that the Scripture is the only Means of Conveyance of the Will of God to Mankind, I return to the Question proposed.

How we can prove the Books of Scripture to have been of divine Inspiration ?

A. 1. I answer in the same Way as before, that there is no Revelation, if the scriptural Revelation be

be not that Revelation ; so there is no written Revelation, if the Scripture be not that Book.

2. I answer, that there is as much Proof for the Inspiration of the Scripture, as the Matter is capable of, if we shew,

1. That the Scriptures have for the Proof of their Inspiration the Testimony of such as were inspired.

2. That they were written by inspired Persons, and that they were inspired, when they writ them.

3. That they are worthy of such Authors, and have upon them the Characters of such Inspiration.

1. The Testimony of Persons inspired is as much a Proof of the Scriptures, as if it had been a Matter they themselves had been inspired with.

And therefore the Evidence that we have for the Inspiration of such Persons, is a sufficient Evidence for the Inspiration they give Testimony to.

But the Scriptures of the Old Testament are cited by our Saviour and his Apostles, whom we have before proved to be inspired, as the Oracles of God, and therefore the Scriptures of the Old Testament are of divine Inspiration.

But though the Old Testament has the Testimony of the New to vouch for its divine Authority, what can this testify to the New, when there is no other Revelation, and no inspired Person to come after?

But this will be helped by the next Evidence, which is that

2dly, The Scriptures were written by Persons inspired, and that they were inspired in the writing of them.

1. That the Writers of the Old Testament were inspired, we have already proved from the Testimony of the New, as far as that is of Authority.

And that the Evangelists and Apostles, whom we have proved to be inspired, were the Authors of the New Testament, we have as good Assurance as the

the *Jews* had, that the Pentateuch was written by *Moses*, or that there was such a Person as *Plato*.

Nay so much greater Evidence have we, as it has been the Interest of the *Christians* to preserve these Records safe and entire ; and consequently, according to their Sense of them, they are of divine Inspiration, and wrote by those inspired Persons. And for which there can be no greater Evidence than this Sort of Tradition, unless we would have God reveal it to every particular Person.

But as this is unreasonable, we must rest upon that which is the only possible Evidence, and which was not contested by the Adversaries of Christianity.

2. The sacred Penmen were inspired in their Writing. For,

1. There was as much need to write as to teach : To write with Respect to Posterity ; as to teach to the present ; but the Conveyance of Tradition being defective, by the Direction of the holy Spirit, they committed their Discourses to Writing, *John* xx. 31. 2 *Pet.* i. 5.

2. There was as much need to write by Inspiration, as to teach by Inspiration : Nay more so, because what they write was to be a Rule of Faith to the Church, whereas what they taught could last no longer than the Memories of fallible Men could retain it ; so that we may conclude, that if they taught and preached by the special Assistance of the holy Spirit, they were also under his Conduct when they writ.

3. Those divine Penmen conceived themselves to be alike inspired in Writing and Teaching ; and therefore they began their Epistles declaring their Authority, and requiring the same Regard, as if they were present.

Now if they conceived themselves to be inspired (whom we have proved before to be so,) it is cer-

ain they were inspired in Writing, because they must be best Judges of it.

4. There is the same Proof for Inspiration in their *Writings*, as in their *Teaching*, as what they taught the same as what they wrote: And accordingly they appeal to the Testimony given to the *one*, for the Confirmation of the *other*, See 2 Cor. i. 13. Gal. 8, 9. 2 Cor. xii. 12. Gal. iii. 5. 1 Cor. iv. 1. v. 4. all which Places give Authority to what they writ; but what Authority could that be of to oblige others to receive it, if they themselves received it not by Inspiration, and their Writing and Teaching were not the same?

III. The Scriptures are worthy of inspired Authors, and have upon them the Characters of such.

Which will appear,

1. If we consider the Writers of them were illiterate as well as learned. For God can make an inspired Person out of an *Amos* or a *Peter*, as well as out of an *Isaiab* or a *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 27. And as it was in Preaching, so it is in Writing the Gospel, which God no less gave them a Mind to indite, than a Mouth and Wisdom in teaching to speak. And therefore where all was by Revelation, it was not as the Man was, but as he was made; and St. *Peter* was as much inspired as St. *Paul*, so he writ with as much Certainty as he.

So that there are as few Objections made against the unlearned, as the most learned of the inspired Writers.

But if those Writers had wrote from themselves, the unlearned could not have wrote on such sublime Subjects, and their Compositions would have been full of Errors; but as they are not, 'tis evident they were inspired.

And therefore the supposed Errors in them, are the Faults of Transcribers; for if they had proceeded from the Writer, they would have appeared more

in the Composition of the *unlearned* than the *learned*, which they do not; therefore they were both inspired, and wrote by the same Spirit.

2. The Scriptures will appear worthy of inspired Authors; for tho' they are written not with *Excellency of Speech*, yet there shines such a Majesty thro' the whole, that none could write after this Manner, *except God was with them.*

I freely own that they are not written according to the ordinary Rules of Art and Method, yet we may see under the Veil of a seeming Irregularity, so much Beauty shining forth, and experiment so much Virtue proceeding from them, that they can proceed from nothing but God. The seeming Irregularities cannot detract from the divine Authority. We must be under Difficulties from our Unacquaintedness (at this Time) with the Style, and Way of Writing, as well as the Customs of those Ages; but had we lived in the same Age, we should have been able to make a truer Judgment, than we now can do.

But now tho' all the Parts of Scripture are not equally alike, yet they are all plain in the same essential Doctrine, and in which the Salvation of Man is concerned.

And not only so, but the Style, and Order of Words, if thoroughly understood, would be very surprizing.

But above all we may see the Footsteps of a divine and extraordinary Assistance in the admirable Discourses of our Saviour, and his Apostles upon several Occasions.

I proceed now,

IV. How we prove the Books that are now extant, to be those very Books that were writ by Persons inspired?

Now this will be an Answer, if we prove,

1. That there were once such Books.

2. That

On REVELATION. 163

2. That these are the very Books that were once
said to be inspired.

3. That these Books are not corrupted.

1. The first of these is not denied.

2. That these are the Books we have as much
proof of, as for any Thing we have not seen our-
selves; so that either these are the Books, or no-
thing of that Kind can be depended upon.

3. These Books are not corrupted, I mean by
Design or Accident.

If by Design, it must be either by *Jews*, *Here-*
tics, or *Orthodox*.

1. If by the *Jews*, it must be either before or af-
ter our Saviour: If before, our Saviour had charged
them with it.

If after, how came they to leave those Prophe-
cies uncorrupted, which prove our Saviour to be
the *Messiah*? Or if they had corrupted them, they
could have been detected by *Christians*, who had
the Old Testament in their Custody.

2. It could not be by *Heretics*, because the Scrip-
tures were in Multitudes soon dispersed over the
Christian World; and they had been found out
and exposed, had they attempted to do it.

3. It could not be by the *Orthodox*, for the same
reason as before given; for as to the Old Testa-
ment, they were as watchfully observed by the *Jews*,
the *Jews* were by them, and both the Copies of
the Old and New Testament were so soon dispersed,
that it would have been impossible to have attempt-
ed it.

Having proved the Certainty of Revelation, I
proceed now,

III. To shew the Order observed in that Revela-
tion; where,

1. I am to consider the several Ways by which
God revealed himself.

2. Shew the Difference between divine Inspiration and diabolical Illusions.

3. I am to consider the several Periods of divine Revelation.

4. I am to shew why God did thus gradually proceed to reveal his Will to Mankind.

1. I am to consider the several Ways by which God revealed himself, and they are by *Inspiration, Vision, Dreams, and Voices.*

1. *Inspiration.* Job xxxii. 8. 2. *Tim.* iii. 16.

Now it seems to be called *Inspiration*, because it is insensibly communicated, and as it were breathed into the Soul, as the Soul into the Body; by which term it is properly distinguished from all other Species of Revelation. For all the rest are sensible Ways, whether by Representation, as Visions and Dreams; or by Action, as Voices.

Now there is a *threefold Inspiration.*

1. A *natural*, so 'tis said of God, *who bath put Wisdom into the inward Parts,* Job xxxviii. 36.

2. There is a *providential* Inspiration, as in the Case of *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, *Exod.* xxxi. 3. when God chose them out, as being of themselves well disposed and fitted for the Working of the Tabernacle, and after an extraordinary Manner, and by supernatural Assistance, qualified them further for it.

3. There is an Inspiration purely *supernatural.*

Of this Sort is that divine Influx, commonly known by the Name of *Regeneration*, when God so changes the Heart by the powerful Operation of his Spirit, that it is said to be new. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26.

But that which is more to our Purpose, is when God, in *Daniel's* Phrase, *revealeth the deep and secret Things*, and doth so communicate his Will, that the Person conceives, and thinks, and acts as the divine Power would have him conceive, think, and act.

On REVELATION. 165

Thus it was in the Case of the Apostles, they spake as the *Spirit gave them Utterance*. And this being the most eminent Way of God's communicating his Will, is called *Revelation*, in the New Testament especially.

2. Another Way by which God revealed himself, was *Vision*, or *Sight*; this was so common, that all the Ways of Revelation are sometimes set forth by this Term.

A *Vision* is the Representation of an Object. And though the external Senses are, as it were, laid asleep in a Trance, yet the Things presented at that Time to the Imagination, are as plain as sensible Objects that lie to the Sense. Thus St. Paul as clearly saw our Lord in a Trance in the Temple, as when he appeared to him in his Way to *Damascus*,

In this Case, viz. in *Vision*,

1. Things imaginary and internal are evidently presented as if they were real and external. Thus much is intimated in the Case of *Peter*, *Acts* xii. 9. to whom it is said, when the Angel smote him, and the chains fell off from his Hands, *he wist not that it was true—but thought he saw a Vision*. From whence it follows, that all this might have been represented by way of Vision. Thus it was to him when he fell into a Trance, *Acts* x. 10. &c. Of this Kind of Vision were *Jeremiah's*, Chap. xiii. 1. &c. xxv. 15. of the same Kind were *Ezekiel's*, Chap. iii. iv. v.

In which Cases, when the Things represented are wholly imaginary, what is in Phrase positively said of them, is to be supplied with, *as it were*. *Acts* x. 10.

2. In *Vision*, remote Things are represented as near, and present. Thus *Ezekiel*, when a Captive in *Babylonia* saw in the *Visions of God* what was doing in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, as if he had been actually there. *Ezek.* i. 1. and viii. 3.

3. In *Vision*, future Things are as clearly represented, as if they were present. Thus *Saul*, when deprived of his Sight, saw in a *Vision* *Ananias* coming in, and by which Means he knew him as perfectly when he came to see, as if he had known him before.

From whence we may observe,

1. That *Vision* is supernatural. *Ezek.* viii. 1. *Rev.* i. 10.

2. That it is internal. So that when the Name of *Vision* is given in Scripture to this Way of divine Communication, it is not from any Use of corporeal Sight, but because of the Clearness of it, and the Conformity it bears to the corporeal Sense.

By which it is distinguished,

1. From the *Shechinah* which was God's visible Manifestation of himself, as he did to the Patriarchs, and the *Jews*.

2. From the Appearance of Angels under a human Form.

But the *Shechinah* was a visible Manifestation of the divine Presence, and not a Revelation; and the Angels were only Messengers of a Revelation; and so neither of them belong to this Place.

3. Another Way of Revelation was by *Dreams*.

There is so far an Agreement between *Vision* and *Dreams*, that in both the external Senses are bound up; so that a *Vision* may be called a *supernatural Dream*, and a *Dream* may be said to be a *natural Vision*. In *Job* xxxiii. 14, 15. iv. 13. they seem to be taken for one and the same Thing. But otherwise they are spoken of as two distinct Ways of Revelation. See *Num.* xii. 6. *Joel* ii. 28.

And the Difference between them seems to be,

1. That the *Vision* was always when the Visionary was awake; but *Dreams*, when the Person was asleep.

2. In a *Vision* the whole was *supernatural*: But

to dream is a *natural* Motion of the Spirits, and Disposition of Body, which the Spirit of God, or an Angel makes use of ; both as the Mind then was in a State of repose ; and also as what was suggested that Way made a stronger Impression upon the Mind, when not diverted by outward Objects. For it seem'd necessary that in all Revelations there should be a settled Disposition of Mind ; and therefore it was either found so, as in Dreams, or made so by some divine Operation, as in a Vision. In both the Senses were bound up ; but in a Vision, by a supernatural Agency ; in a Dream by the mere Effect of Nature.

If it be asked, how then is there a Revelation by Dream, when Revelation is supernatural, and a Dream natural ?

I answer, that though it is natural to dream, it is not natural to dream as *Pharaoh* did, that there should be seven Years of Famine, and seven Years of Plenty.

And this will farther appear, when I am to consider the Difference between what is *natural*, and what is *divine*.

4. Another sort of Revelation was by *Voice*, and that by Way of *immediate* Communication, as God spake to *Moses Face to Face*, ; or it was *occasional*, and was for some particular Direction, as to *Hagar*, &c. or was for Confirmation, as when it was proclaimed from Heaven, *this is my beloved Son*, &c.

Thus I have treated of the several Ways of Revelation recorded in Scripture.

But now granting that God did communicate his Will by *Inspiration*, *Vision*, *Dreams*, and *Voices*, yet how shall we be satisfied, that when it is said, *I have dreamed, I have dreamed*, *Jer. xxiii. 25.* that it is not a Vision of *their own Heart* ; or that there may not be a *lying Spirit in the Mouth of the Prophets* ? And

This brings me,

2. To consider the Difference between divine Communications, natural Impressions, and diabolical Illusions.

In the Resolution of which Case, I shall not discourse after a philosophical Manner about the Force of Imagination, or the Influence invisible Agents have upon Mankind, which are unknown to us; I shall only say, that divine Inspiration is discovered as Light by itself, and which the Person divinely inspired is assured of.

But if it be said, don't we see enthusiastical Persons as confident of their imaginary Inspirations, as if they were true.

I answer, because some People are Lunaticks, are all inspired Persons to be no more credited, than if they were Lunaticks? Or don't they know themselves to be any more inspired than Enthusiasts? Confidence in imaginary Inspirations may be great, but the Perception, and so the Assurance cannot be alike to what is real. But tho' the Deity can so communicate itself as that the inspired Person shall know it is from him, yet as a farther Satisfaction of such as had a Revelation, there was often added some supernatural Proof. So *Gideon*, *Judges* vi. 21. when he had some doubt of what the Angel said, was confirmed by Fire out of a Rock.

And *Moses* was convinced of his own Mission from God, and the Authority he should have with the People, when the Rod in his Hand was turned into a Serpent, and his Hand made leprous.

Let then a *Moses* appear in the Name of God, he must work Miracles greater than the Magicians, before he could require *Pharaoh* to obey him.

And without Predictions and Miracles, a Prophet cannot be known to be a Prophet, and an Inspiration to be an Inspiration; and by these Characters we may judge of both; as to the Authority

ty of the Mission, and the Truth of the Inspiration, where the Evidence was necessary, there was never wanting one or both of these: Indeed there may be Inspiration, where there is neither of these; but there is no Obligation on others to believe it, till it is proved by such Evidence as can come from none but God.

So much for Inspiration, in Opposition to diabolical Illusions, and which may serve as a general Answer to the other particular Instances that remain.

Thus it was in Visions, which as to the Visionaries was with that Evidence, as could leave no manner of Doubt of what was therein represented. See *1 Kings xxii. 19.*

The same is to be said of Dreams, which had such a peculiar Stroke upon the Imagination, that the *divine* had a different Effect upon the Person, from what was *natural*: And therefore *Abimelech*, before he had expostulated the Case with *Abram*, communicated his Dream to his Family, from the Confidence he had in himself of the Truth of it.

And especially has this a sufficient Evidence as to others.

1. When such Things are therein discovered, which they had no Knowledge of before.

2. Or which were so remote in Place or Time, as none but God could reveal it.

3. Or when the Interpretation was different from the Dream. This was the Case of *Pharaoh*, and of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and of the *Midianitish* Soldier, *Judg. vii. 13, 14.* where if we grant that these Dreams as to the Matter, might have been the Effect of a rolling Imagination, yet how the seven Kine should predict seven Years of Plenty and Famine; or the Felling of the Tree be an Emblem of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dethronization, and that a Cake of Bread tumbling into the Host, should

pre-

170 On REVELATION.

pre-signify *Gideon's* Success, was unaccountable, if it did not come from God.

Lastly, The like may be said of a Revelation by *Voice*, which, if internal, is the same with a Dream, or Vision, and so has the same Sort of Evidence. If external, it is its own Evidence. Or it was by *Oracle*, and then the Authority of the *Voices* was justified by the numerous Predictions, and the Design they promoted of encouraging Virtue. So that were the Case to be put upon this Issue, we may venture the whole Cause of Revelation upon it, when there is nothing wanting that can be desired to justify its Truth, and that there is no Pretence for applying the same Terms of Evidence and Sincerity to *Imagination* as to *Inspiration*.

For when was it ever known that *Imagination* empowered Persons to talk all Languages, and to cure all Distempers?

What *Imagination* could give *Moses* the Power of working Miracles?

What *Imagination* could inspire *Joseph* to give such an Interpretation of *Pharaoh's* Dream as proved itself true by the Event?

When did *Imagination* raise the Dead? Or command Fire down from Heaven, as *Elisba* and *Elijah* did?

From all which we see what Evidence we have for the Truth of our Revelation; and what could we desire more to bear Witness to what we are to believe?

Having shewed the Difference between divine Inspirations, and diabolical Illusions,

3. I am now to consider the several Periods, viz. the *Patriarchal*, before the Law; the *Mosaical* under the Law; and the *Evangelical* under the Gospel; and the gradual Progress of Revelation from first to last.

The *Patriarchal* State extended from *Adam* to *Moses*.
The

ON REVELATION. 171

The *Mosaical* State extended from *Moses* to *John Baptist*.

The *Evangelical* State begun with *John Baptist*, and is to continue to the World's End.

Under the *Patriarchal* State I have proved there was a Revelation, but the Revelation, especially before the Flood, as far as it is handed down to us in *Moses's* Writings, is obscure; but the Sum of it amounted to this, that God was reconciled to Man after his Apostacy; that he had established an Atonement; and in Process of Time the Son of God should in our Nature actually appear, and become a Saviour to us, and be a Propitiation for our Sins.

That Part also of the *Patriarchal* State after the Flood, till *Abram's* Departure out of *Haran*, *Moses* gives us little Account of, though it was a Space of 360 Years.

The Reason of which seems to be much the same as before the Flood, and that was the general Depravation of Mankind, of which the Attempt upon *Babel* was an Instance, and the Call of *Abram* out of the Land of the *Chaldees* an Evidence; the Reason of which Call was this; Idolatry was then growing upon the World, and therefore God revealed himself to *Abram*, that he might preserve the true Religion.

This is the third Branch of the *Patriarchal* Period, or *Abraamical* State.

The first Revelation of this was to *Adam*, that it should be *the Seed of the Woman*. The next was, that this *Seed* should descend from the *Stock of Abram*.

This was the Reason why *Moses* did so carefully draw down the Pedigree of *them* which terminated in *Abram*; and why he did so punctually set down the Time when this Promise was first made, *Gen. xviii. 18.* and which as the Principle of all God did

did several times repeat to him ; and to *Isaac* and *Jacob*. *Gen.* xxii. 18. xxvi. 4. xxviii. 14.

But tho' Revelation did more eminently conduce to the Good of the World, where it was received, than Nature and Reason did, yet here Revelation made a Pause, and the *Patriarchal* gave Way to the *Mosaical*, which had an Advantage of the other. As,

1. That Religion was here *National* ; whereas under the *Patriarchs* Religion was rather *Domestical* than *National*.

2. The State of the *Jews* was directly under God's Government ; *Moses* being only his Minister, and God making them his Propriety, *Deut.* iv. 33. xiv. 2.

It was a typical State of a more excellent one, the Evangelical : So that the Rites and Sacrifices under that Dispensation, had a peculiar Respect to the great Sacrifice, the *Lamb* said to be slain from the Foundation of the World.

4. I may add there was an Improvement made upon this typical State by the *prophetical*, which was ennobled by many illustrious Prophecies concerning the *Messiah*. And when in the Declension of the *Jewish* State Prophecy might be expected should decay with it, it on the contrary increased, till on the sudden it wholly ceased, when the Revelation of that Kind was sufficient.

5. After this there was a Cessation of Prophecy above 400 Years ; at the close of which by the Coming of the *Messiah*, it was foretold, Prophecy and Revelation should revive, and a more plentiful Effusion of the Holy Ghost than ever had been before. Now what could be the Reason of this, but that the *Jews* might more earnestly desire the Approach of that happy Age ; and that they might be convinced that there was a more perfect Dispensation which they were to expect ? and that is,

3. The

3. The *Evangelical* State, which is the Completion of all the Types and Prophecies ; so that the *New Testament* is the Evidence and Proof of the *Old*.

4. I proceed now to consider why God did *gradually* proceed in revealing his Will to Mankind.

Here are *two Questions* to be resolved.

Quest. 1. Why did not God communicate his whole Will *at first* ?

Quest. 2. *Why in these last Days* ?

Ans. 1. As to the former, it may as well be asked, Why did God promise at all ? Why did he not give when he promised ? It may be asked, Why was there such a Thing as Prophecy ? Or why was it not accomplished immediately ?

And if that be a Question, it may as well be asked, Why is there such a Thing as Succession ? Why there are Causes and Effects ? and why all Things are not existent together ? For Promises and Prophecies imply Succession, and to require there should be no Promises and no Prophecies, is in Effect to require there should be no Succession.

2. A Promise on God's Part, implies the Certainty of the Thing in its Season, as well as Prophecy. A Prophecy is certain, because of God's infinite Power, Wisdom, and Knowledge ; and a Promise implies his Faithfulness ; and therefore whatever is promised or prophesied of by God, is as certain in its Causes, and shall be in the Event, as if it is now done, or we had it in Possession.

3. It is as much, or more for the Honour of God, that there should be a Succession of Beings, and Events, &c. as if they were all existent at once ; and consequently as much to order such Beings, and Events in Succession, as it is if they were present.

4. As there are in Nature a *first*, and a *second*, and so on in Progression ; so it is as accountable for

for God to make his Will known to Mankind, to begin from a less to a higher Degree. And to have all Revelation at once, would appear as irregular as for all Mankind to have lived and died at once.

5. Especially where such Revelations are suited to the State of the World, and that the Dispensations of one Age, would not suit the Temper and Circumstances of another. And we have good Reason to believe this to be so, because there has been such a gradual Progress in Revelation.

6. This is still the more accountable, if we consider, that the Obligation of Mankind arises from the Notification of the divine Will; and that according as the Revelation of it is, so is the Obligation.

2. From hence we may be able to answer this Question, *viz.* Why God sent his Son in *these last Days*? For as there were many Prophecies concerning the State of Things to be accomplished by the Coming of the *Messias*, so we find sufficient Reason for the Justification of divine Providence in laying the Accomplishment of this Scene so remote from the first Ages of the World. For,

1. By this Means we see what a wonderful Concatenation there is in the divine Operations; and how Events succeed according to his Will.

2. It doth not seem, that the World was prepared for it before. For had Christ been born and died as soon as *Adam* had sinned, Mankind had not been sensible of the Obligation, or of the Necessity of the divine Power to rescue them; if they had not experienced the Inefficacy of any other Means.

3. We are to consider, that the Benefit of Christ's Death looked *backward* as well as *forward*.

For,

1st, This Promise that the *Seed of the Woman* should break the *Serpent's Head*, being made to *Adam*, he himself must consequently have the Benefit of it; and

On REVELATION. 175

and that, 2dly, He had as much a Title to the Benefit of such an Atonement, as if he had seen it executed. See 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Tit.* i. 2, 3. *Gal.* iii. 8.

4. I may say, there was not a more proper Time for the Coming of our Saviour into the World, and for all Events depending upon it, than that in which he appeared.

And that if we consider,

1. The *Jews* were in general Expectation of it, in Conformity to ancient Prophecies. Nay, the *Gentiles* had something like it. *Vide Tacitus. Hist. Lib. 5. c. 2.*

2. It was a proper Time; because as the World had experienced the Inability of all human Means for reforming Men's Manners, so in that Age especially, when the Wisdom both of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* was in its Height, and yet both of them exceedingly wicked.

3. It was a fit Season. For, 1st, by the Dispersion of the *Jews* many of the Prejudices which other Nations had taken against the *Jewish* Religion and Nation were worn off.

And this was much furthered by the Translation of the Old Testament into *Greek*. From whence possibly arose that Opinion mentioned by the *Roman* Historians. *Ex Judæa profecti qui rerum potirentur: That out of Judea should proceed those that should rule the World;* which seems to be but the *Latin* of the *Greek* in *Micah* v. 2. ἐκ ἐβραίων ὁ ἡσυχάζων.

2. Another Means was the Success of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Arms, by which the more remote and barbarous Nations were civilized, and a freer Access had to them.

Indeed God can conquer all Difficulties, as was evident in the Propagation of the Gospel. But he doth in the most extraordinary Cases use sometimes ordinary Means; and it was observable, that at the very Time of our Saviour's Birth, the Temple of

Janus

176 On REVELATION.

Janus was shut up, which had happened but twice from the Foundation of the City. And this was a proper Season for the *Prince of Peace* to appear in.

And so I am brought to the

IV. General, to shew the Perfection of the Gospel Revelation; and that no other Revelation is to be expected: In *these last Days* hath he spoken to us by his Son.

Here we may consider the World, as to Revelation, under a two-fold Period, *viz.* the *former* and *latter Days*. So that the first Thing to be considered is, when *these last Days* began, and by what Characters they are to be known; and they are such as these.

1. The Appearance of a Person, that from his Spirit and Temper, the Scripture calls *Elijah*, *Mal.* iii. 1. who was to prepare the Way for the *Messiah*.

2. The Restauration of the Spirit of Prophecy, which was to be restored in the last Days, *Joel* ii. 28. *Acts* ii. 16.

3. Many Impostors which were to appear, and who did appear about the Time of the *last Days*, *1 John* ii. 18.

4. The *last Days* were, when the *Messiah* himself did appear, *called the Fulness of Time*; to which we may add the Conversion of the *Gentiles*, *Isa.* ii. 2. and *lx.* 1.

From whence it is evident, that the *latter Days* began with our Saviour, and is to continue to the End of the World, so there can be no other Time, and so no other Revelations.

And this will be confirmed by the next Branch:

2. The Perfection of the Gospel Revelation, included in that *Phrase*, God in *these last Days* has spoken unto us by his Son.

'Tis but reasonable to suppose, that as there has been a gradual Progression of Revelation, so the highest Degree of it should be reserved for the Son of God, *Heb.* i. 2. &c.

Now

On REVELATION. 177

Now as the Son is the last that appears, so beyond his there cannot be supposed any other Revelation, but that his Revelation must be like himself, perfect; and so there can be no other Gospel. For here it is,

1. That we find the great Prophecies fulfilled in the Messiah.

2. In him are all the Types fulfilled.

3. By him is the most perfect Revelation of the Will of God made known.

4. By him we have the most perfect Rules; and all Things that conduce to the Perfection and Happiness of Mankind.

So that any one, who compares those several Dispensations together, as he must own a Gradation, so he must allow the Christian Institution superior to all; and it will be as evident that it can be exceeded by none.

For as it is as perfect as can be; we cannot ascend higher in our Notions of Things than we are there taught: We cannot exceed its Rules in our Practice; nor be defective in any necessary Part of our Duty; we advise with and observe it. Nor can we desire more excellent Encouragements and Rewards. So that tho' the *Law of Nature*, or of *Moses*, made nothing perfect, yet the bringing in of a better Hope by the Gospel did.

And now we have nothing farther to expect; no more another Revelation; than another Messiah; no more than another God to reward us, and another Heaven to reward us with.

But to give farther Light and Force to the Argument, I shall shew,

1. That there is no Proof of any other Revelation.

2. That there is no need of any.

3. That the Scripture shuts up all Revelation with itself.

1. There is no Proof of any other Revelation.

VOL. I.

N

If

178 *On REVELATION.*

If any will contend that there is, or shall be such a Revelation, there must be some antecedent Revelation, such as the Scripture is ; or it must be some personal Revelation made to himself, or some other, to prove it by.

But there is no antecedent Revelation in Scripture to prove it.

If it is a personal Revelation, where is the Evidence for it ?

All Revelation must have a sufficient Evidence ; and a new one must have a stronger Evidence, or at least equal to the former, or else the Evidence will fall short of what it is in Competition with.

If there be then no such Evidence for such a new Revelation, there is no Credence to be given to it.

2. There is no need of any farther Revelation, for,

1. There can be no more noble and useful Subject for a Revelation, than that of the Gospel, which is concerning God's Reconciliation to Mankind, and their Redemption by the Death of his Son. And where this is plainly revealed, there is no Place for a second.

2. If we consider the Promises and Conditions of the Gospel, what can be proposed of greater Advantage to those who obey it, than the Favour and Protection of God in this World, and everlasting Life in the next ? And when this is promised, there can be nothing offered beyond it.

And such as the Promises are, such are the Conditions required of us, which are as unchangeable as the Reward : So that there is no Room for another Revelation, unless we can change the Nature of Things, and make *Evil Good, and Good Evil.*

All the Abatements that can be allowed, are inserted into the Body of this Revelation, viz. Remission of Sins upon Repentance, and an Allowance

for human Infirmities ; and lower than these the Gospel cannot descend, since then it would establish Iniquity by a Law ; and then indeed it would have been defective, and there would have been a Place for a *new*.

3. The extent of this *Law*, is not like the *Jewish Law*, fitted only to the Circumstances and Genius of the *Jews*, but for the whole Race of Mankind : It tends to make all Men happy in all Conditions, and if exactly observed, Peace and Love would every where abound.

4. If we consider the Evidence given to the Gospel-Revelation, (*viz.* the Miracles of our Saviour and his Followers) we shall not want other Evidence to be given to that Revelation ; or that there needs any other Revelation for want of Evidence in this.

This leads to the third Branch.

3. The Scripture shuts up all with this Revelation.

The Time of our Saviour's Appearance (to his second Coming) is called the *last Days* in Scripture, and consequently has none to succeed it.

If therefore there is to be any Alteration as to this Revelation, it is not to be before, but must be after our Saviour's second Appearance. But of that we have nothing to say.

As to the Case of personal and occasional Revelation, I would not altogether deny this, because I know not how far some Persons may in some extraordinary Cases be enlightened by a Spirit of Prophecy ;

1. Yet it may greatly mislead Persons : For it is all transacted *within*, and the Imagination may be too much influenced by the Body, by an Agitation of the animal Spirits, by Enthusiasm, and even a devout Temper, and certain Circumstances of Life, that it may be wholly natural.

2. And Persons have taken an Effect of Imagination for divine Illumination.

3. They are also much to be suspected of Imposture, because we read of little of this in Scripture; because that which is the proper Means of judging, and of distinguishing Imagination from Revelation, is laid aside, which is Reason; and when all is resolved into the Person's own Testimony and Assurance; because they exalt their own private Revelations to the same Authority with the Revelations of Holy Writ; and seek to justify one from the other: Because they prefer this Way of Contemplation and Inspiration above the plain Precepts of Christianity. And there is no Evidence for it beyond their own simple Affirmation.

4. But further, we ought not to be too easy of Belief in these Matters, because the Consequence of it is very dangerous; for whither may not Persons be led under such a Delusion, if it should prove one. So that in the Issue of such a Spirit of Revelation, as it is not promised by God, and therefore not reasonable to be expected, so it is not to be desired.

Having shewed the Perfection of the Evangelical Revelation, and that no new Revelation is to be expected; I come now,

1. To prove the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith.

2. That it appertains to all Persons to judge by this Rule.

3. And that with Modesty and Humility, with Sincerity and Impartiality.

1. The Scriptures are the only Rule by which we are to judge and determine concerning Articles of Faith, and Matters necessary to Salvation.

'Tis agreed on all Hands, that there must be some Authority which Faith is to be resolved into; and according as the Authority is, such is our Faith, human, or divine.

On REVELATION. 181

So that divine Faith must have divine Authority, which is no other but divine Revelation, written, or unwritten.

And where there is no verbal Revelation by Persons divinely inspired, the written Word is the only Authority that Faith can be resolved into. *John v. 29.* And our Saviour with the *Jews* appealed to the Holy Scriptures for the Proof of his being the Messiah. And this was the Course he took at other Times. See *Mark x. 17. Matt. xxii. 29. 31. Luke xxiv. 25, &c.*

In like Manner the Apostles proceeded to convince the *Jews* of their Incredulity. See *Acts xvii. 2, 3. xviii. 28.* To the Scriptures they remitted them, as to a certain and sufficient Rule. See *2 Pet. i. 19. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.* And when these Things were spoken at that Time more immediately of the Old Testament, they may equally as well be applied to the New; which is not only as much the Scripture, but also by the Addition of it, renders the Old much more compleat.

Now there can be no Reason that we should be more at a Loss with the more perfect Revelation, than they were under the less perfect; that what God delivered by his Son should be less sufficient to direct us, than what he spoke at *sundry times, &c. by the Prophets*: Especially considering, that from the Time of *Malachi*, to the Appearance of *John Baptist*, they were left, as we are now, wholly to the written Word of God for their Direction.

Since then there is no more Need in the Christian Church of any traditional Word, than the *Jews* had at that Time, it follows, that the Scripture is the only Rule of Faith; and that what is not contained therein by positive Proof, nor by evident Consequence to be deduced from it, can no more be of divine Authority and Obligation to Christians, than unwritten Tradition was then to the *Jews*.

This is the true Resolution of Faith ; and if our Saviour put the Proof of his being the Messiah upon this Issue, we have good Reason to think it is the true Method of resolving any Point of Doctrine.

But grant this, yet as Doubts and Disputes may arise in the Church about the Sense of this written Rule ; therefore who shall determine them ?

I answer, according to our Saviour's Rule, *search the Scriptures.*

2. That every Man is to judge for himself.

Before the Appearance of our Saviour, there had been long Disputes between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, (*John* iv. 29. *Luke* ix. 53.) about which was the Church ; between the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, about a future Life ; what is the Rule of Faith, and concerning the Messiah.

Now if there had been an infallible Authority, they would have appealed to it to decide their Disputes : But we read of no such Appeals in Scripture to any living infallible Judge ; but they were ordered to *search the Scriptures*, as the infallible Rule by which they were to be determined. And the Apostles advised their Auditors to *prove all Things, not to believe every Spirit* ; and tho' they were infallible themselves, referred the *Jews* to the written Word as the Rule, and to their own Conscience as the Judge.

If ever any might have required an *implicit* Faith, and blind Obedience to their Judgment, it was Christ and his Apostles ; but they left every Man to Judge for himself ; and St. Paul commended the *Beræans*, *because they searched the Scriptures, whether those Things were true.*

And whereas it might have been thought, that the Time would come, when Inspiration would cease ; and so Men would be left to their fallible Judgment in the Interpretation of that Rule ; yet there is no other Provision made by Christ and his Apostles

Apostles for preventing such Inconvenience ; but all Ages were left in the same Circumstances with the Jews from *Malachi's* Time to *John Baptist*.

The divine Writers supposing that there was in the Scriptures such a plain Revelation of all Things necessary to be known in order to Salvation, that Men would be able to find out the Truth, or as much of it as was necessary to Salvation, if they came to it with sincere, and well disposed Minds. But then,

3. They must search with Diligence and Impartiality.

For tho' the Scriptures are plain in most necessary Points ; yet there are some of those that require a strict and careful Attendance ; of which Kind are such as contain the Characters of the Messiah. And therefore our Saviour commands us to *search* ; or we shall be condemned as Persons whose Ignorance is to be imputed to their Negligence.

But there is a farther Qualification required, and that is Sincerity and Impartiality.

Our Saviour resolves the Infidelity of the Jews into Obstinacy and Insincerity, See *John* v. 42. And these and the like vicious Inclinations hinder Men from finding Truth, or from receiving it, tho' they find it ; and so it would be if there was an infallible Judge ; and so it was when our Saviour and the Apostles were *Helpers* to Men's Faith.

Perverseness, Pride, and Self-Conceit, will make the Scripture difficult, tho' never so plain in itself.

But now if the contrary Temper prevail, if they have a hearty Desire to know the Truth, and to do according to what they know, they shall not fundamentally Mistake. For God will not leave an honest Mind without Means sufficient for Salvation, *John* vii. 17. viii. 31, 32.

And if we put the Case, that a Person sincerely disposed shall fall into *Error*, it shall not be damnable,

nable, but what may be as consistent with his Orthodoxy, as Infirmities are with a good Man ; for the Providence and Promise of God are concerned, that a Person of a truly sincere Mind, continuing such, shall no more fall into a damnable Error, without his own Fault, than be guilty of a damnable Sin.

Or however, if he should fall into such an Error, yet it shall not be damnable to him.

The Apostle speaks of *damnable Heresies*, and we have those Truths which we call fundamental ; and both are rightly so termed ; because those *Truths* are so essential to the Christian Faith, that it cannot be the Christian Faith without them ; and those *Heresies* are so destructive to the Christian Faith, that it cannot be the Christian Faith with them.

But yet because it is an Error of invincible Ignorance, and not that Sort of *Heresy* which is the *Work of the Flesh*, God will not impute it to such to their Condemnation ; and that their Piety and Charity will do more to save, than their Mistakes to damn them.

But because for the most Part the Error is rather in the *Will* than the *Understanding*, therefore, as we should enquire after the Truth, and be careful to receive it, when it is proposed, so it is necessary, that we should *receive the Truth in the Love of it*, and then it will have a good Influence upon us.

And as they are the best Principles that make Men good and religious, so that is the best Testimony of our being in the right, that we are thereby made more holy. I look upon this as an undoubted Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion, that it most of all conduces to such an excellent End : And it will appear that he best understands it, that makes it the Rule of his Life as well as Faith ; which if he doth, as he cannot mistake in his

Enquiry

Enquiry after Truth, so it is certain in the Issue he shall not miscarry. For then he that comes thus prepared to *search the Scriptures*, will both find what they *testify* unto, and obtain that *eternal Life* which is therein revealed and promised.

Having shewn the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith; that it is the Privilege of all to repair to that Rule for Satisfaction; and that by searching they may come to a Knowledge and Understanding of that Rule.

I shall next proceed to the Way of Interpretation of Scripture. And here,

1. I shall premise some Things with Reference both to the *Perspicuity* and *Difficulties* of Scripture.
2. I shall lay down such Rules as may be of Use for the better Interpretation of it.

When we speak of the Scriptures, I take it for granted, that the Translation of it, generally speaking, renders the true Sense of the Original.

And that this is so, the general Agreement of all Translations is a Proof,

From whence,

2. I argue, that the Scriptures were so wrote as to be understood. And indeed it wou'd reflect upon God, if a Book wrote for so noble a Design should labour under such a Defect, as the Compositions of Men are not guilty of.

3. We may suppose farther, that at the Time when the Scriptures were wrote, they were intelligible to those Persons that understood the Language, which was a great Advantage they had above all after Ages; for there is no Language which hath not Phrases of its own; and therefore where these are not to be understood, or are not observed, the Sense is lost or prejudiced.

4. We may conclude, that what had no Relation to Persons, and particular Customs, but contained common Matters, was intelligible to others that lived not in those Ages.

5. The

5. The Scriptures being to continue to the World's End for the Use of Men, they must consequently be intelligible in the main by all Persons in all Times, or they would have been written in vain.

6. I may say, that in Fact the Scriptures are plain in all Things, that are intended for the Use of all, and are necessary to be known.

Such are,

1. The Being of a God ; the Creation of the World ; the Worship to be given him ; his Government of the World ; the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State.

2. Such is God's punishing wicked Nations, and prospering good ; his carrying on a Train of Prophecies, and accomplishing them all in Time. These are Matters of Fact, and what are obvious to all in the Reading of them.

3. Such is the Redemption of Mankind by Jesus Christ, and all that he did, and suffered for us ; and what he is now doing for our Sakes.

4. Such are the Prophecies and Miracles ; tho' some of the Prophecies may be difficult to be understood, yet others that relate to our Saviour and others, are very exprefs : And as to Miracles, they are too evident to be insisted upon.

5. Of this Sort are the Terms of Salvation ; among those Things that are set down in Scripture, we may find whatever relates to Faith and Practice ; and in these two are comprehended all that is necessary to Salvation.

Every unprejudiced Person cannot but own the Scripture clear in these Points, if he will read them diligently.

If it be said that there are insurmountable Difficulties in Scripture, and that the different Expositions of Scripture is a Proof of them.

1. I answer, that is no Objection ; because no-
thing

nothing can be certain, if the calling it in Question, render it uncertain.

2. If the various Signification of Words in Scripture be a Reason why the Scripture is obscure, that is common to all Books, and proves too much.

3. Tho' there are Obscurities in Scripture, it falls upon such Points as are not necessary: For there is no greater Sign of their not being necessary, than that they are not what we can understand, or are not plainly to be found in Scripture.

4. Tho' there are Obscurities, they are nothing in Comparison to the plain Texts; and the Obscurities are of no Consequence.

5. When I say there are Obscurities in Scripture, and that they fall upon less necessary Points, I grant that even those obscure Parts are not without their Use; as we ourselves may perceive, when we have found out the Meaning of any of them; and that they give Light to those that were otherwise.

And indeed God has so blended the *difficult* with the *easy*, that our Industry may be excited by our Endeavour to understand it, and our Labour be rewarded by the understanding of it.

Towards the better understanding of which,

2. I shall direct to some Rules that may be of use to us in our Enquiry.

1. Where in the first Place it is advisable, that we be very conversant in the sacred Text, by which Means much of the Obscurity will wear off, and the Phrase and Style will be more evident; and the Matter of it will make the stronger Impression on our Minds, and be cleared up insensibly to us.

2. Although it be of this Advantage to read the Scriptures in Course, yet it will add much to the rendering the abstruser Parts more easy if we begin with the plainest. For this is a reducing Things into a natural Method, and a gradual proceeding from Point to Point, till we come to the End of that, and the Difficulties together.

3. A-

3. Another Rule for the understanding of Scripture is to be well acquainted with the principal Design, whether as to *Faith* or *Practice*; from whence doth arise what is usually called the *Analogy of Faith*, and which will be a Standard upon all Occasions to have Recourse to.

4. For the better understanding of Scripture, it is a proper Way to compare Scripture with Scripture. For that which is obscure and difficult in one Place, is usually explained and made clear in another.

1. For by this Rule we come to understand the Idiotisms of the Scripture.

As for Example, without this Key, how irreconcilable would it be to other Texts, to have it said, *God would have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*; and that our Saviour should require his Disciples *not to labour for that Meat which perisheth*. But now if we attend to the Genius of the *Hebrew*, and compare one Scripture with another, we shall find, that the *Jews* having no Degrees of Comparison, were wont to express Comparisons by *Antitheses* or *Negatives*; and then the Sense of the Negative *not*, is *not so much*, that is, *not so much for the Meat that perisheth*, as for that which *endureth to everlasting Life*. And if this be observed, we shall find there is no Contradiction, when in one Place of Scripture Sacrifices are required, and in another, that *God would have Mercy, and not Sacrifice*.

2. By this Way of Comparison we come to understand the figurative Phraseology in Scripture.

As for Instance, God is said in Scripture to have Eyes, &c. and yet we read *he is a Spirit*; when therefore such bodily Properties are imputed to him, it is in a figurative Sense.

So this Expression of our Saviour, *this is my Body*, is a figurative Phrase. For as the *Jews* were said to eat the *Lord's Passover*, when they eat Lamb

in Memorial of it ; so this Expression is to be understood in the same Manner.

3. By this Way of Comparison we come to understand the typical Phrase of Scripture.

There is a great Conformity between the Old and New Testament, and especially as to what is the main Subject of the *Mosaical* Law, the Types, Ceremonies, and Rites of it ; and where there is this Correspondence, we must, for the understanding of the one, borrow Light from the other. And therefore when the like Forms of Speech are used in the New Testament, as are in the Old, it is to be supposed, that we are well acquainted with the Old, or that we must have Recourse to that for the understanding of the New.

For Instance, it is usual in the Old Testament to call a *Sin-Offering* by the Name of *Sin*. See *Lev.* v. 3. 8. *If.* liii. 10. when therefore the Apostle says, that *Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many ; and unto them that look for him, he shall appear the second Time without Sin unto Salvation ;* it is, according to his Subject, to be supplied after this Manner, *without a Sin-Offering*.

4. By this Way of Comparison we come to be acquainted with the Prophetical Way of Writing.

I have just now observed the Relation that is between the Law and the Gospel. And from this Relation it is, that the Prophecies of Scripture, especially as to a future State of the Church under the Gospel, are clothed in the Phrase of the *Mosaical* Institutions and Rites. Thus the Success of the Gospel, and Enlargement of the Christian Church is described under such Characters. See *If.* ii. 2, 3. xvi. 23.

But now as the Happiness of the future State is often described by such Phrases as belong to this present State, and not to that they are literally applied to : So the Prophecies concerning the State of the

the Church under the Gospel, are frequently exemplified under such Resemblances and Forms of Speech as suited the *Jews*, for whose use they were wrote; and yet none could think that such the Kingdom of the *Messias* should be, as those Expressions verbally signified; when it was evident from the Prophecies of Scripture, that that legal State was to be abolished. And therefore in the Explication of such Phrases we must not consider what they exactly signify in their original Use, but to what Purpose they serve, and are applied.

But above all, there is nothing doth so lay open the Secrets of Prophecy, as the Event; for by that means it is as clear as if it had been historically related: And as if we look back from the Event to the Prediction, we the better understand that Prediction, which without the Knowledge and Observation of the Event we could not perhaps have understood. So by comparing what yet remains to be fulfilled, with what has been fulfilled, we have an useful Key for the understanding of the one by the other.

Thus for Instance, when in the Old Testament we find it prophetically threatened of *Babylon, Idumea, &c.* that the *Stars of Heaven*, and the *Constellations thereof*, shall not give their *Light*, that all the *Host of Heaven* shall be dissolved: We have a Key to unlock the mysterious Expressions of the same Kind in the New Testament. As when it is said (if it be to be understood of the Destruction of *Judea*) that the *Sun* shall be darkened, and the *Moon* shall not give her *Light*, and the *Stars* shall fall from *Heaven*, &c. Now by a Reflection upon the State of those Nations abovesaid, we find all intended in those mystical Expressions was, that these Nations shall be utterly destroyed, and all Orders, and Degrees of Men, represented by the *Sun, Moon, and Stars*, should be dissolved: And therefore we are

in the prophetical Passages in the New Testament to understand those Phrases and Forms of Speech the like Way.

These Rules are sufficient to direct us in the Interpretation of such Forms of Speech which often render the Sense of Scripture difficult : But thank God, there is but little of this, in Comparison of what is plain, and in which the main of a Christian's Duty is concerned. This every one that is conversant in Scripture will confirm, to the silencing the Cavils which some Men of Wit may pretend to the contrary.

If we will believe our own Eyes, the Scripture is plain in all that is necessary to know ; and if we do according to what that teaches, and we may learn from it, we shall be Partakers of that everlasting Happiness, which is there revealed ; and for the promoting of which it was written.

But if Men will disregard the ordinary Means of Salvation, and are not persuaded to repent by what is revealed in Scripture, they will not be persuaded, though one rose from the Dead.

For a Person from the Dead cannot tell them more expressly than the Scripture has done ; that there is a God ; that the Soul is immortal ; that there is a Heaven and Hell ; and therefore if what is there revealed, and believed upon such Revelation, should not prove as effectual as what is reported by a special Messenger from the Dead, it must be from some Reasons, which belong to one, and not to the other ; but that there is no Reason for : And therefore this can proceed only from the Power of Lusts and evil Habits ; and where these are, a Messenger from the Dead would make no stronger Impression, or more lasting, than in the other Case.

For while Persons are under the Power of their Lusts, they will continue the same, if one came from the Dead to reprove them. Had *John Baptist* rose from

from the Dead, as *Herod* once believed, it would no more have made him a true Penitent, than the Preaching of that holy Man did, when alive; as long as *Herodias* was by him to seduce him, and he was contented to be seduced.

And the Case is the same in Persons delaying their Repentance; if they will not repent by the Arguments of the Gospel, they will not be persuaded by the Testimony of one from the dead.

And the Question is, whether a Person may not reason the same Way, and as much to his own Delusion, against the Testimony of one from the Dead, as against the Authority of Scripture.

And whether there is not Reason to conclude, that if these Excuses prove sufficient to detain Men in Impenitency, notwithstanding all the Arguments to the contrary in Scripture, the same will not as much influence the Sinner, if one should come from the Dead to admonish him? It certainly would. And therefore I shall close all with three or four Inferences.

1. From hence I infer, that there is no absolute Need of any other Course to be taken for the Conviction and Conversion of Sinners, than what is already taken.

If there be a Revelation which is believed to be divine, and the Arguments contained in it are sufficient to persuade Men to believe and repent, then there is no need of one's rising from the Dead. If there be Impenitency with Reason and Proof sufficient to convince and persuade, there will be Impenitency still; and consequently what is written, is sufficient to persuade us to a Belief of what is written.

2. God is not bound to give, nor can Men in Reason desire, that he should use an extraordinary Course, were the ordinary is sufficient. This was the Temper of the incredulous *Jews*, *Matt. xxvii.*

42. And there will be no Ends if we exceed the ordinary Bounds, and expect Evidence beyond what is sufficient.

3. We are bound to believe what we have sufficient Evidence for ; and to repent, when the Reasons for it are sufficient, tho' we have not all the Evidence it is possible for God to give. 'Tis possible for God to send *Lazarus* to certify, that there is a *Place of Torment* ; and it is possible, tho' not probable, that it may be a Means to bring them to Repentance. But that doth not lessen the Obligation of believing, and doing according to Revelation ; and which, without further Evidence, is of itself sufficient.

4. Those that have the Evidence of divine Revelation, and do not repent and live according to it, are inexcusable. *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.* And if they that had only *Moses* and the Prophets were inexcusable, what must we say of those who have Christ and his Apostles ; and who must have more Reasons for the Confirmation of the Truth of our Religion, than were under the *Law* ? And therefore, if any continue in a state of Unbelief and Impenitence under the Gospel, and so perish, 'tis wholly from themselves ; and therefore it is necessary for all now to hearken to *Moses* and the Prophets, to Christ and the Apostles *this* their Day ; for if they now hear them not, they can no more be saved, than they would have been *persuaded tho' one had rose from the Dead*.

On the 1st of January 1841
the first of the year was
marked by a severe frost
and a heavy snowfall
which covered the ground
to a depth of several
inches. The weather
was very cold and
the wind was very
strong. The snow
was very deep and
the ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard.

The snow was very deep
and the ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard.

The snow was very deep
and the ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard. The snow was
very deep and the
ground was very
slippery. The people
were very busy and
the work was very
hard.

Bishop *GASTRELL*'s

BOYLE's LECTURES

OF THE

CERTAINTY and NECESSITY

OF

RELIGION in General,

A B R I D G ' D.

THE GASTRAL

LECTURES

OF THE

UNIVERSITY AND MEDICAL

OF

RELIGION IN GENERAL

AND

B
C
T
G
gi
ect
on
E
M
nd
sh
re
aft
are
ece
ot f
In
lea
me
B
G
vo
s,
F
cre
ere

Bishop GASTRELL's

BOYLE's LECTURES

OF THE

CERTAINTY and NECESSITY of RELIGION in GENERAL.

THE *Certainty and Necessity of Religion* is what I undertake to prove; and therefore I shall consider *Religion* in its full Latitude, and shall only so far insist upon the Proof of God, as his *Existence* is included in the *Idea of Religion*, and that in order to shew the *necessary Connection* betwixt the *Being of a God*, and the *Obligations of Religion*.

But since these Obligations result from the *Nature of Man*; as well as the *Being and Attributes of God*, and from the Relation the *one* stands in to the *other*, I shall chiefly make choice of such Arguments, as are best perceived by us, and entertained with the least Resistance or Suspicion. And I will take due Care to distinguish such Notions as are absolutely necessary to the *Being of Religion*; and those that are not so; tho' used often in its Defence.

In order to pursue my Method with the more clearness, it is necessary in this Place to define what I mean by *Religion*.

By *Religion* I mean, that *Worship* we are to pay God, or are *obliged* to upon the Prospect of his Favour, or under the Penalty of his Displeasure in this, or a *future State*.

From whence 'tis plain, that in order to prove there is such a Thing as *Religion*, we must prove there is a God, that does *oblige* Men to live after

such a particular Manner ; and that Man is actually under such an Obligation, the Performance or Neglect of which will be attended with very different Consequences, and those sufficient to determine him to act one Way rather than another.

I. Then, I shall give some Account of the *Nature of Man*, the *Nature of God*, and that *Relation* there is between them, so far as will establish the Notion of *Religion*.

II. I shall prove that there is a *God*.

III. From the Knowledge I have shewn we have or are capable of having concerning the *divine and human Natures*, I shall deduce a positive Proof of *Religion*.

IV. I shall evince the Truth of *Religion* from a *Comparison* of it with *Irreligion*.

V. I shall consider the *Grounds* and *Pretences* of *Irreligion*, and shew the Folly of their Principles.

VI. I shall make some Enquiries into the *Causes* of *Atheism* and *Irreligion*.

And conclude with an Explication of the different Notions of *Atheism* and *Deism*.

I. I am to give some Account of the *Nature of Man*, the *Nature of God*, and the *Relation* there is between them, as far as will establish the Notion of *Religion*.

The Knowledge of *Religion* must begin from the Consideration of ourselves. Now our *Existence* being granted, the same *Consciousness* that satisfies us in this, will inform us, that we are capable of *Thinking*, *Perceiving* and *Knowing*, which Capacity is called *Understanding*. And that we can determine ourselves to *think* or not to *think* ; to *move* or not to *move* ; to *act* or not to *act*, which *Power* is called the *Will*. Upon farther Reflection, we may find in several Instances, we have an *equal Power* to *move* or not to *move*, to *think* or not to *think*, according as we please. In others we can determine our

selves but one Way. In the first Cases we act with *Liberty*, in the latter by *Necessity*. But all our Actions are stiled *voluntary*, as proceeding from ourselves, only when the acting or not acting proceeds from some extrinsic Violence, which is called *Force*, as distinguished from *Necessity*.

'Tis plain also, that we are capable of *Pleasure* and *Pain*; and to obtain the *one*, or avoid the *other*, is the whole Employment of the Soul. That there are some Things which we are naturally pleased or displeased with, without being taught to be so, and consequently that we desire, or forbear several Things in Compliance with these first original Sentiments.

From whence it follows, that there is something antecedent to our Actions, which is the *Reason of it*, without which it had not been: This *Reason* is called an *End*, the Perception of which at a Distance is the Cause of all those Actions, which are looked upon as requisite for the Attainment of it. Now if this Representation is true, and the Action fit, a Man is said to act *wisely*, if not, he acts *foolishly*.

But since we often act foolishly by lessening our present Pleasure, or bringing more Pain upon ourselves, and that the Cause of this is the different Representation of Things future, from what when present, we are from hence convinced, that there is no other Way of remedying this Evil, but by rectifying our Perceptions of Things, which, being future, do not by immediate Impressions assure us that they really are what they appear to be. And, if we strictly examine ourselves about these Matters, we shall find that what we actually feel, we cannot possibly imagine to be otherwise than as we feel, that is, we are now undeceivably conscious of all our *Sensations* and *Perceptions*; but how we shall be hereafter *affected*, we can no otherwise know, than

than by knowing the different Natures of the Things that are to *affect* or be *affected*.

Now as to the Knowledge we are capable of in this Kind, we are to consider, that there are some Notions so clear to our Understandings, that we cannot possibly deny our Assent to them. Others are not so clear, but have more to incline us to believe them *true* than *false*. Others will not suffer us to determine either Way; and others we have no manner of Notion of at all.

But besides these, we are to take Notice of two other Kinds of Difference: The one between the *real Nature* of Things, and their *Appearances* to us: The other betwixt the Appearance of Things to us, with respect to *Truth* and *Falshood*, and their Appearance to us with respect to *Action*, and the Consequence of it, *Happiness* or *Misery*.

As to the *first* of these *Differences*, we find that what we are once really *certain* of, we are always so; but what is in its own Nature certain may appear at different Times *doubtful*, or *probable*, or *certain*: And there are Things, which though we are not *certain* of, we are sure we know as much as we can of, by the Strength of our present Faculties.

As to the other Difference in the Appearance of Things with respect to *Action* and its Consequences, it often so happens, that where the Truth of a Thing seems doubtful to us, it appears safer and more both for our present and future Happiness to act one Way than another.

This is all the Account of human Nature, which I thought necessary to my present Design of establishing the Truth of *Religion*.

The next Thing I am to do is to consider the *Nature of God*.

God is an eternal Being of all *possible Perfections* in himself, and from whom every thing else derived its Being, and whatever belongs to it.

Now as to the *Relation* between God and Man, we must conceive, that God is our *Creator, Parent, Protector, Governor, Master, and Benefactor*; that Man is his *Dependent, Subject, and Servant*. All which Relations do necessarily result from the Natures of the Being related, and will appear when we enter upon the particular Proofs of *Religion*.

Supposing therefore that I have given a true Account of the *Nature of Man*, the only Thing remaining to be done, before I come to the main Argument I proposed, is to prove,

II. That there is such a God as I have represented.

I shall consider the Being of God under the different Degrees of *possible, probable, and certain*.

1. As possible, I believe no one can think that any Definition of God is *absurd*, or has any *Contradiction* in it. But further, that we may have a more distinct Conception of God, we will consider the several Ideas of which this complex Notion is made.

Now 'tis plain, that every one has a Notion of Time, and the several Periods of it; and that he can never assign such a remote Distance, but that he can still suppose some Being to exist *before and after*; which Being, before and after which he cannot conceive any Time, or other Being, he calls *eternal*.

In like Manner when we consider the *Variety of Beings* in the World, we are never able to suppose such a Number of them, but that there may be still a greater; and this possible *Variety of Things*, never to be exhausted, is stiled *infinite*. And if we can conceive such an *Infinity of Things* possible, we can conceive a *Power* proportional to produce them, and a Knowledge answerable to that which can know whatever can be known, and that is whatever can be.

Thus it is we conceive an *eternal intelligent Being* of *infinite Knowledge and Power*. Thus

Thus also the *different Degrees of Knowledge, Power and Happiness* we are conscious of, do assure us that we are still capable of greater, and this in a continual Rise, without any Thing to terminate our View. From whence we may conceive that God is *infinitely happy*, as well as *knowing and powerful*,

Further, I think we may conceive that such a Being did *necessarily exist of himself*; that he is *unchangeable*; that is an *eternal Being always is, is always alike knowing, powerful, and happy*.

And a Being of *infinite Knowledge, Power and Happiness*. The Creation of all Things, and their Dependence upon him, are no hard Things to be conceived by those that own his *Power*; and he that knows all Things may easily be supposed to effect whatever he designs by the fittest Means; and that is to be *infinitely wise*. And what other Reason can we frame for an intelligent, infinitely happy Being to *act* upon, but his own free Pleasure? And who can hinder the Almighty from doing his Pleasure? But that the Happiness of all such Beings are capable of it, so far as it is consistent with his *Wisdom* to grant them the Enjoyment, should be agreeable to his Pleasure, we are not disposed to doubt.

From all which I may safely conclude, that the Idea we have formed of a *God* is no *Chimera*, but a very *possible consistent Notion*.

How far the bare Conception of such an Idea, or the meer *Possibility* of such a Being proves the *Reality of his Existence*, I shall not here examine, only thus much I observe, that the greatest Objection made against this Kind of Proof is ill grounded.

For 'tis usually urged, because it cannot be said that whatever is *possible*, for that Reason *actually is* that therefore the actual Existence of God does not follow from the *Possibility* of such a Being, whereas

the Conclusion may hold good in this Case, and no other. For *Conception* supposes *Possibility*, and *Possibility* a *correspondent Power*; and a *Power of existing*, when applied to such a Being as God, must infer *Actual Existence*.

Having shewn, that it is *possible* that there is a God, I proceed,

2. To shew, that it is *very probable* there is one.

A common Argument for the Being of a God is the *general Concurrence and Agreement of Mankind* in the Acknowledgment of it, as appears from the Accounts of the *present State of the World*, and the Histories of the present and past Ages.

Those few that in different Ages opposed this Belief have had no Followers, and several of them renounced their Opinions at the Seasons of their greatest Seriousness, which they maintained at looser Hours.

From whence, I think, we must conclude, that the Belief of a God must be *very probable*.

If it be an *Error*, what can we assign for the Cause of such an *universal one*?

'Tis possible, indeed, the *generality of Mankind* may be deceived in a Judgment founded upon the Reports of *Sense and Imagination*. But the *Notion and Existence of a God* are Matters of pure Thought and Reason, in which *Sense and Imagination* have no Share, and therefore can never owe their Original to them.

'Tis true, the Mind by the Help of *these Faculties* makes *false Representations* of the Deity, and occasions many Errors concerning him; but it cannot be inferred, that those *Notions of God*, in which all Men agree, proceed from the same Fountain as *these additional Errors*; and consequently *those* may be as much Errors as *these other* are, tho' they are not yet discovered to be so.

The contrary, I think, is plain: For the *vari-*

264 *The Certainty and Necessity*

ous Representations in this latter Case, shew Men's *Incapacity* to perceive the Objects they are employ'd about ; whereas the *Constancy*, and *Universality* of the Belief of a God, is an Argument of the Truth of the Matter perceived.

There's nothing in the *Idea* of God that falls under the Cognizance of our Senses, so that if we should endeavour to represent a *pure Idea*, which is the Object of Reflection only, by *sensible Images*, no wonder if the *Representation* be very different : From whence it plainly appears, that the *sensible Representations* of him must be *various*, and consequently *false*.

But when all Men think alike concerning the Objects not perceivable by Sense, it is a certain Sign that their Ideas are *proportionate* to the Faculty that perceives them ; and very *probable* that they are *truly sorted* together. For how can we imagine the Minds of Men to be so disposed as to be under a *Necessity of being deceived*, as they must be, if a *constant universal Appearance of Truth* should be only a Veil of *Falshood* ? For how can a Man help believing that to be true that appears to him to be so ?

But here perhaps it may be said, where the Evidence is not so strong as to command our *Assent*, Error may wear the Face of *Truth*, tho' we may have not been able to discover the Cheat.

To which I answer, that allowing a *bare possibility* of *erring* in the present Case, all that I designed to prove from this Argument holds good, *viz. general Consent*, which is, that because all People acknowledge a God, 'tis therefore very agreeable to *Reason* to believe so.

All that can be further said to countenance a Suspicion, is, that possibly there was a Time when Men believed *otherwise* ; but some People having started up this Opinion, it has been spread from Age to Age, till it became *universal*. But

But there is no Ground for this *Supposition*, because there is no *Marks* to be found of the *Rise* of this Opinion; and because no parallel Instance can be given, that any Opinion whatsoever hath actually obtained so universal a Belief as that of a God, and afterwards was proved to be false. I can conceive that a *mistaken Matter of Fact*, or a *conjectural Hypothesis*, may after the Discovery of *fresh Circumstances* in the one, or *new Observations* about the other, make a great Part of Mankind of another Opinion. But the Being of a God has been in every Age believed by the Generality of Men. And the *Observations of Sense*, upon which it is founded, are the *same* now they ever were.

But allowing the *Supposition* true, that there was a Time in which God was nowhere acknowledged in the World, though I think it impossible; whoever invented the *Notion*, it must be owned to be agreeable to the *common Reason of Mankind*. The Arguments which first obliged Men to the Belief of a God are now lost; and there is no Appeal made to *Antiquity*, as if Men were obliged to believe this Truth because it is so *ancient*. But the Arguments made use of are built upon the *Reason of the Thing*, which is always the same; and the same Reasons for the Being of a God have always had the same Influence.

Nothing then remains but to enquire into the Force of those Reasons upon which our *Belief of a God* is founded.

I suppose it now but a *probable persuasion* arising from the *first obvious Proofs* of it, upon a bare Proposal of them to the Understanding, confirmed to us by the general Agreement of all Mankind in the same.

However since there are Persons who pretend, that Probability is not sufficient, I proceed now to shew the *Certainty* of the *Being of a God*.

All

All the *common Arguments* upon which the general Belief of a God is founded, are taken from the *visible Frame* of the World, which having in it *Marks of Power and Wisdom* superior to the most wonderful Effects of *human Skill and Strength*; we conclude that there is *some Being* exceedingly *more knowing and powerful* than *Man*, who is the *Maker* of this Fabrick.

And when we consider the *Extent* of this Work, and the various *Ends and Uses* of Things, all *assistent* to one another, and *subservient* to some *general Design*, we conclude farther, that the Author of all these Things is able to do any Thing else that is possible to be done; that he who has so wisely disposed every Thing he has made to such proper *Ends*, has exercised his *Power* so far, and no farther, because it was agreeable to his *Wisdom* to do so.

This is easy and natural, and what has in all Ages satisfied both the *Learned* and *Thoughtful*.

But suppose *some extravagant Thinkers* should distrust all their Reasonings of this Kind, I will further prove, that they are certain in their Belief, who believe a God upon *these* Grounds.

But before I enter upon this Argument, I think it necessary to enquire what *Certainty* is.

Certainty, or *Evidence*, (which I shall all along take in the same Sense) considered in the *Ideas* which are the Objects of our Understanding, is a *necessary Agreement or Disagreement* of one Part of our Knowledge with another.

As applied to the Mind, 'tis the Perception of such *Agreement or Disagreement*, as excludes all conceivable Possibility of a Mistake.

And thus I take it for granted that we are certain of our own *Perceptions* and *Sensations*, to the same Degree as we are of the *Agreement or Disagreement* of any *pure, intellectual Ideas*.

Except this be allowed, we have no Knowledge

at all. And he that grants thus much, must acknowledge *there is a God*, from these following Considerations.

Being then satisfied of our own *Operations* and *Existence*, and by a passive Perception of various *Impressions* by the Help of certain *Organs* of the *Body*, convinced of *the Reality of the Things without us*.

Upon a farther Exercise of our *active Powers*, and Application of our Senses to external Objects, we come to these *certain Conclusions*.

That there are a great many *Changes* in the World: That there are a great many *new Appearances* which *disappear* again: That under all these *Changes* and *Varieties* of Appearance, that which we call *Matter* is *constantly the same*. That the *different Appearances* in *Matter* proceed from the differences of *Bulk*, *Figure*, *Motion*, and *Rest*.

That we are conscious of several Things in ourselves, which we perceive as *different* from all *these*. That there was a Time when this *Consciousness*, which we call *Spirit*, was joined to what we call a *human Body*; that when this *Body* is dissolved, then that *Consciousness* ceases to be joined with it.

Being assured of these *Conclusions*, we are led to these *Enquiries*.

How came *Matter* to exist? And what are the *Causes* of its various *Changes*?

How came we to be conscious Beings?

How are we united to *Matter*? What *limits* the Continuance? and what dissolves the Union?

In pursuance of these *Enquiries* we find it *impossible* how any Thing should *make itself*; and that something must be *eternal*.

And as 'tis evident something must be *eternal*, so 'tis plain from the Succession of *new conscious Beings*, and the *different Dispositions of Matter*, that every Thing is not so. Now if something be *eternal*, every Thing which is not so, must be *made* by that which

which is. Otherwise something must have made itself, which is impossible. Or one temporary Being must make *another*, which it cannot do but by the Force of such Powers which together with its *Existence* it received from some *other* Being, and so on till we come to the eternal Fountain of all *Power* and *Being*.

The only Question then is, What is eternal? For the better Satisfaction in which I shall,

1. Consider all the *Claims* and *Pretensions* to eternal *Existence*.

Afterwards I shall examine what those *Attributes* are, that must belong to an eternal Being.

And then shew that that Being to which all *these Attributes* agree, is what we call *God*.

1. As to the *Claims* and *Pretensions* to eternal *Existence*.

These are all the *Suppositions* that can be made; either

That *Matter* is alone *eternal*; or

That the *only* eternal Being is what we call *Mind*;

or

That *Mind* and *Matter* are both *Eternal*.

But *Matter* alone, or co-eternal with *Mind*, may be considered under different *Respects*.

For either we imagine it eternally rolled up in one *entire solid Mass* without *Motion*;

Or as *loose* and *divided*, and in *constant Motion*.

Out of which *quiet Mass*, or *moving Atoms*, this *present World* was formed.

Or else we must suppose that the *World*, as it now is, to have been *eternal*, with a constant *Succession* of all Sorts of Things in it.

2. But which of these has *Certainty* on its Side, will be best determined by considering the *necessary Attributes* of an eternal Being.

The *Characters* of an eternal Being are *necessary Existence*, and all possible *Perfections*.

An eternal Being must *exist necessarily*, for it was always what it is ; and therefore there *always* was the *same Reason* ; which is the *same Necessity* of its existing.

'Tis utterly impossible that what we allow to be an eternal Being might not have existed. For then we must suppose some Power sufficient to *binder* its Existence, which we cannot do without allowing the Existence of some other eternal Being ; but then, what we take from the one, we must give to the other, so that there must be some eternal Being which always *necessarily* existed.

2. An eternal Being has all *possible Perfections*.

This is a Consequence of *necessary Existence*, for any *Perfection* was wanting, then a Being of *greater Perfection* might be conceived *possible*, which could have hindered the Existence of this : And if so, then Existence is not *necessary*, because it is not impossible but it might not have existed ; but an eternal Being does necessarily exist, and therefore has all possible Perfections.

But farther, if there can be an eternal Being, necessarily existing of all *possible Perfections*, as 'tis plain there may, whatever is *eternal* and necessarily exists, must have all other possible Perfection, except we suppose two eternal necessary Beings of equal Perfections, and independent of each other, may exist at the same Time, which is absurd. For why should not one have as much Perfection as another, when both are supposed independent, and to have their Existence and Perfection from themselves ? Why should one limit its own Perfections, and the other not ? Or whence should this *Impotence* proceed in one, which was not in the other ? *Eternity* and *necessary Existence* are the same in both, and therefore wherever these Attributes are found, there must be the same Powers.

Another Way of proving that an eternal Being must

must have *all possible Perfection*, is that the very Notion of *Possibility* does imply a *Power* correspondent to the utmost *Capacity* of Things *possible*: So that to say a Thing is *possible*, is to say, that there is some *Power* capable of *producing*, or *having* it: And therefore if you suppose an *eternal necessary Being* to want any *Perfection*, what is imagined to be wanting to it must be, for that very Reason, *impossible*. For it cannot want what is in its *own Power* to have; and it can receive nothing from any other Being: Because no other Being of greater *Power* is *possible*; not a *temporary Being*, because its *Existence* and *Perfection* is derived from that which is *eternal*; not a *necessary eternal Being*, because *this*, which is supposed *imperfect*, is as much an *eternal necessary Being*, as the *other*, and therefore must have the *same Perfections*. So that when I say, that the *Perfection* supposed wanting is, for that Reason, *impossible*, I do not mean only that it is now *impossible* but that 'twas absolutely so; because there never could be any greater *Power*, than what an *eternal necessary Being* must have.

3. Now if *something* is *eternal*, and *necessary Existence* and all *possible Perfection* are the *essential Characters* of an *eternal Being*, then *this eternal Being* must be, what we call *God*. The *Characters* of an *eternal Being* belonging to *him*, and to *no other*.

That *Thinking*, *Willing*, and *Perception* of *Pleasure* are *Perfections*, is evident: These therefore must be the *principal Characters* of an *eternal Being* and his *Knowledge*, his *Power*, and his *Happiness* must be commensurate to his Being; and whatever is made by him, must be made for his *good Pleasure* and the *Happiness* of those Beings which are capable of it; and all his *Works* must be such as are for a Being of those *glorious Qualifications* to make and *design* for such *Ends*.

Having in a positive direct Manner proved that

there is a *God*, by shewing there is some *eternal Being*; that all the Characters of an *eternal Being* agree to that Idea we have conceived of *God*; I proceed to shew that the Characters of an *eternal Being* can agree to nothing else but what we call *God*, and therefore that *eternal Being* must be *God*.

It has been already proved, that something must have been *eternal*. We have reckoned up the Pre-
ensions to *Eternity*, and considered the Characters of an *eternal Being*.

Now if that which is *eternal* be not *God*, and the Characters and Attributes of an *eternal Being* do not belong to him, then *something else* must be *eternal*; but none of the forementioned Suppositions, which exclude the *Being of a God*, will be found to be true: And therefore what I have proved concerning *God* must stand good.

This it is my present Business to shew, that as *God* is certainly *eternal*, he is the *only eternal Being*; and whatever is conceived to be *eternal*, if really is so, must entirely belong to him.

First then, I will shew the Impossibility of *Matter's* (with all its Parts *united and at rest*) existing necessarily from all *Eternity*, and that the *World* in time should be produced by it.

Solidity, Extension, Figure, Motion, Perception and Will, are the chief of our *Ideas*; and if we are mistaken in these, we are not capable of having any Knowledge at all. *Solidity, Extension, and Figure*, I perceive, co-exist inseparably in *Matter*; but it does not follow, that where these are, there is *Motion, Perception and Will*, there being no necessary Connection between any of these *Ideas*, and the *Essences of Matter* before mentioned.

How then does *Matter*, which we suppose to exist without any *Motion, Perception, and Will*, come to have *Motion* added to it.

All the *Motion* we perceive in *Bodies* without

us is communicated by one Body to another ; but this will not help us to conceive how Motion should begin where every Thing is at *rest*. *Will* and *Perception* *Matter* has none, and therefore without this *Power of beginning Motion*, which is in the *Will*, it must eternally continue in *Union, Indistinction, and Rest*.

If we imagine *all the Parts* of the World *loose* and *all in Motion* from *Eternity*, it will be quite *irrational* to suppose that at *some certain Time*, these *Atoms* met together, and produced this present World.

Because this is the supposing an *eternal Motion* of *Atoms* before the Production of the World, without any Cause to produce it. For *Motion* does not *necessarily exist*, because *Matter* exists ; because then it would always *exist* in *every Particle* of *Matter*, nor does it exist of itself ; and *Matter* cannot produce it in itself *from all Eternity*, because it cannot produce it at all ; and therefore there can be no such Thing as an eternal Motion of *Atoms*.

Further, it is absurd to ascribe such new Effects to *Matter* and Motion together in the Production of the World, as for a *whole Eternity* before never proceeded from them, and could not possibly at any Time be *produced* by them. For *Matter* and *Motion* not implying *Perception* and *Will*, we shall never be able from hence to account for the Existence of Beings endued with *Perception* and *Will*, which are Qualifications distinct from *Extension, Figure, and Motion*.

That *these last* may be where the *other* are not, is plain ; how then do *those other* come to be added to them ? If *Matter* at *Rest* can never make us conceive any *Possibility* of *Motion* in it, without the Help of something else besides *Extension* and *Figure*, neither can *Matter* and *Motion* together give us any Idea of *Perception* and *Will*.

The next Hypothesis to be answered is the supposed *Eternity of the World*, under the same Form we behold it.

This Opinion has been most exploded of any, though most of its Favourers have at the same Time asserted the *eternal Existence of a God*; and the Reason was, that learned Men thought the Rise of Governments, Laws, Arts and Sciences an unanswerable Argument of the Newness of the World; and the Truth of those antient Observations are confirmed by many *new Inventions of useful Things* since; it being impossible, if the World had been eternal, but that they must have been found out before.

But if the *Being of a God* is taken out of the Supposition, the Argument will conclude stronger against this Opinion, under which Respect I now consider it; and thus considered, it is attended with the same Difficulties, as the former Hypothesis was.

For *Matter* and *Motion* were no more capable of eternally producing such a *Succession* of various Objects as we see in the World, than they were of producing them and the World together in *Time*; and yet if we suppose an *eternal Succession without a God*, they must be produced by Matter and Motion.

For every *particular new Object*, being produced in *Time*, must owe its Being to that which is eternal; and nothing in that Supposition being eternal but Matter and Motion, every new generation of Beings must have their Original from these, the *precedent Generation* having no other *Powers* nor *Differences* from the *succeeding*, but what arise from the *various Disposition of Matter and Motion*.

This is plain as to all Beings void of *Perception* and *Will*; and if we examine it, the Case is the same with those that have: Because if nothing else be eternal but *Matter and Motion*, these *Beings* must be also produced by them.

And all that hold the *Eternity of the World without a God* maintain this Opinion. But in Answer to it, I will shew, that the *Existence of intelligent Beings without a God is inconceivable and impossible.*

For should it be inquired how such a particular Man came to exist, and to be a *conscious Being*? Whence then did he derive this mighty *Difference of Being* by which he is distinguished from all other? Not from some *intelligent Being* of infinitely *greater Perfections*, nor from any mechanical Powers of Matter and Motion: Both these Causes are set aside in the present Inquiry.

But then nothing remains, but that *Man* must have received his Existence and Qualifications from some other *Man*, who existed before him. But this is absurd, because it is hereby affirmed, that *one Being may solely by its own Power produce another Being of the same Nature and Perfections with itself*; which is the next Impossibility to a Being's making itself.

And therefore if the *World be eternal without a God*, all its Productions must be ascribed to *Matter and Motion*; but Matter and Motion not being able to produce such Things, I conclude, that the *Eternity of the World without the eternal Existence of a God is impossible.*

I have thus considered the several *Hypotheses* above-mentioned, which would exclude God from being the Author of the World.

I shall now take a Review of them in Conjunction with the Existence of a God; and then shew the Impossibility that Things should proceed from any *Thing* else than God.

But before I enter upon this, I must premise something concerning the *Nature and Distinction* between Matter and Mind, as far as we are capable of perceiving them; that so I may cut off a great many Disputes and Mistakes occasioned by the Confusion

Confusion of our Ideas upon this Subject, and that what I have to say afterwards may be the better understood.

I do not perceive any such *Connection* betwixt the Ideas of *Perception* and *Will*, and those of *Extension*, *Figure*, and *Motion*, that where the *former* are, the *latter* must be also.

Nor do I see any Reason why *Perception* and *Will* may not exist separately from *Extension*, and *Figure*, and *Motion*, as well as *Extension*, &c. may exist separately from *Perception*, &c. only because these are actually perceived to exist, and we have not yet been *actually conscious* of such a separate Existence of the other. But this does not hinder the Existence of *Perception* and *Will*; or that they may have a *Substance* of their own, distinct from *Extension*, *Figure*, and *Motion*.

If *Thinking* and *Willing* were common to every Being, we could no more frame an *Idea* of a pure material *Substance* existing without these *Qualifications*, than we can now of a pure thinking Substance without those *Qualities* we attribute to *Matter* only. But from an *actual Separation* of these different Ideas perceivable in *different Subjects*, 'tis certain, that some may exist without the other, though without this actual Separation we could not have known it; and therefore though the other have never yet been perceived to exist separately from these it does not follow they cannot so exist. But considering the vast Distance in the *Natures* of the several Ideas, 'tis very probable they do arise from *different Principles*, and are founded in *different Subjects*.

But let us suppose, that *Perception* and *Will*, *Extension*, and *Figure*, and *Motion*, are ultimately founded in the *same Substance*, which we know nothing more of than that it is *something* which sustains these *different Qualities*, which could not exist of themselves *without* it; yet it is ridiculous to

216 *The Certainty and Necessity*

infer, that *Perception* and *Will* are only *different Modifications* of *Figure*, &c. For why may not *distinct Qualities* co-exist in the same Subject, without being made one from another? Or why should *Perception* and *Will* be any more *Modifications* of *Extension*, *Figure*, &c. than *Extension*, &c. are *different Modes* of *Perception* and *Will*?

I cannot see what Ground they can have for the contrary of either of these, who affirm the *Soul* to be nothing but *Matter* under a peculiar *Disposition of its Parts*.

But that *Thinking* and *Willing*, supposing they actually *exist* in *Matter*, and cannot *exist* without it, are not therefore *Modifications* of the *other Qualities* of *Matter*, may be illustrated by this Instance.

Motion is something added to the *essential Qualities* of *Matter*, and cannot exist without it; but yet *Motion* is no *Modification* of *Solidity*, *Extension* or *Figure*, but something in its own Nature distinct from these: So that it does not follow, that because *Matter* is *solid*, that therefore it must be in *Motion*.

And if this be true of *Motion*, it must be more so of *Perception* and *Will*. If *Motion* may be joined to the other *Qualities* of *Matter* without resulting from them, tho' they are necessarily implied in the *Idea* we have of it, 'tis much more probable that *Perception* and *Will* may co-exist with *Motion*, &c. without being the *Effects* of them: And, if it does not follow that because *Matter* is so modified, therefore it moves; much less can it be inferred, that because *Matter* is so disposed, therefore it *thinks*.

This being premised, it appears much more probable in Reason, that God should be the only eternal Being, than that *Matter* should be co-eternal with him. For the Addition of *Matter* does not add to the Perfection of the *divine Being*.

The Power of producing Matter and Motion, and forming an infinite Variety of Beings, is a Perfection worthy

worthy of God, but does not make him more perfect.

The *actual Communication* of some of his *Perfections* to a particular Rank of his *Creatures*, does raise a new *Idea* of him in *them*, which we call *Goodness*; but this is only disclosing the *Glory* of his *Nature*, not advancing it.

It is therefore most agreeable to Reason, that God should be *eternal*, and the *World* produced in *Time*.

But, if any believe that *Matter at rest*, or *Matter and Motion*, or the *present Frame* of the *World* were *eternal with God*, he must hold that whatever was *eternal with him*, is *independent of him*, or a *necessary Part of the divine Nature*, or did eternally proceed from him.

But neither *Matter*, nor *Matter and Motion*, nor the *Frame* of the *World*, can be eternally independent of God, as has been proved; because it appears, that neither of them have the Properties of an *eternal Being*, viz. necessary Existence, and all possible *Perfections*; nor the Consequence of them, viz. the *actual Production of all temporary Beings*.

And further, what we suppose destitute of *Knowledge* and *Will*, was not of itself allowed to be eternal, from what has been said on the Hypotheses that exclude the *Being of a God*.

And therefore whatever is supposed eternal, which does not enter into the *Idea* we have given of God, must be taken into it, as belonging to the *divine Nature*, or be looked on as the *Effect* of his *eternal Will*.

Thus some have affirmed the *World* to be *God*. Others, that all Things flowed from God; by which, if they mean *necessary Emanation*, they must be referred to his *Being*, if *Production*, to his *Will*: so that however we express ourselves upon these matters, every Thing that we can imagine, must be either *God*, or some *Way* proceed from him.

The

The Inference from this is, That no more belongs to God than we have ascribed to him, and that he in Time made the World, and all Things.

Thus have I, with as much Brevity as I could, examined all Accounts that are given of the present *Existence of Things*, and have proved that without a God they could not have *existed*.

I shall now add some *general Reflections* concerning the *Original of the World*, and so conclude the Proof a God.

That the World, as we now perceive it, must be ascribed to *Chance*, *Necessity* or *Wisdom*.

Chance is a Word of no Meaning, and therefore can give us no Manner of Light into the Nature and Original of Things.

Neither will *Necessity* give us better Satisfaction.

The Question is not, whether it was necessary that God *should make such* a World as this, but whether it was absolutely necessary there *should be such* a World as this *without a God*; and I think it may be demonstrated that it was not. For nothing can be said to be *absolutely necessary*, but what is impossible to be otherwise; but it is not impossible that the World should never have *existed*, or should now *ever be destroyed*. For if it is absolutely impossible then it is absolutely impossible that there should be any Thing of greater Perfection and Power than the World, but it is not impossible that there should be such a Being, and therefore the World might have been hindered from existing, or be now destroyed.

But if any Man shall say he cannot conceive such a Being as could *binder Matter from existing*, or *destroy* it now it does exist; I answer, that as God can do every Thing that does not imply a Contradiction, his Power may *create*, or *annihilate*, though the Manner of it be inconceivable to us.

However, if they pretend they cannot conceive

the Possibility of these Actions, yet it is very conceivable that there may be *some Being* of that Perfection and Power, that tho' he cannot *binder* Matter from *existing*, or *reduce* it to nothing, can yet reduce it to a *confused Chaos*, and this is sufficient to overthrow the *Necessity* of the *present Frame* of the World.

The World therefore must be the *Effect* and *Product* of *Wisdom*, the *Workmanship* and *Contrivance* of a *wise Agent*.

Thus I think it evident that there is a God invested with all *these Characters* I have attributed to him.

Which Considerations will convince us of the Reality of all *those Relations* I have supposed between God and Man, and furnish us with many undeniable Arguments of the Truth and Necessity of Religion : Which is the third Thing I proposed.

Religion is whatever we are *obliged to by God*.

To prove therefore that there is such a Thing as Religion, we are to prove, that *Man* is *capable* of being *obliged to act* after a *particular Manner*, and that *God* has a *Power* of obliging him so to act, and does actually will something of him.

Every one that consults himself will find, that he has a *Power* of *acting*, or not *acting*, according as he is influenced by *different Motives* ; that he often suffers himself to *do*, what he *condemns himself* for afterwards, and neglects to obey *such Motives* as his Mind *approves*. From whence it follows, that there may be such Reasons for his *acting* one particular Way, as he must acknowledge *ought to determine* him.

That Being which has a *Power* of offering such Reasons may properly be said to *have a Power* of obliging him to act such a Way.

That God has such a *Power*, is plain, if we consider what it is that *determines* us to *act* ; which being

ing nothing but *Pain* or *Pleasure*, God, who can put us into the greatest *Pain* or *Pleasure* to all *Eternity*, can by annexing these to different Ways of *acting*, offer such Motives, as we shall be forced to acknowledge *ought* to *determine* us to act one particular Way; and therefore *God can*, if he pleases, oblige us so to act. The only Question then is, whether we are *actually* under such *Obligations*.

But before I resolve this Question, it will be requisite to give a further Account of the *Nature* of what we call *Obligations*, together with the *Right* and *Power* of *obliging*.

An *Obligation* with Respect to *Man* is nothing else but such a *Reason* as when duly offered *necessarily determines* him to prefer one Way of *acting* before another; and this Reason can be nothing but a greater Degree of *Misery* or *Happiness* to be avoided, or obtained by thus acting.

What is meant by the *Right* and *Power* of *obliging*, in what *Respects* they are the same, and in what *Respects* they are different, will plainly be understood, if we consider the several Instances, to which these Notions are applied.

All the Beings capable of *obliging*, or *being obliged*, are *intelligent Beings*, viz. *God*, and *Men*; for as to *Angels*, I shall be silent.

As to *God*, I know not how he can any other way *oblige* men to obey him, than by making them know he has Power to make them *happy*, or *miserable*, and that he will certainly make them the one or the other, as they shall deserve. His being their *Creator* is not *solely* the Ground of his Title to their Obedience. For was *Misery* the *unalterable Condition* of their *Being*, how could the Author of their *Being* oblige them to obey his Commands, when he could not offer any thing to determine them so to act; all Degrees of *Pleasure*, or *less Pain*, being supposed *impossible*. They might indeed, by an over-

ruling

obliging Power be forced to such Actions, but this is not a rational Obligation, performed with the Concurrence of the Will.

Vainly therefore do some magnify the *metaphysical Excellence* of Existence, even joined with the *extreamest Degree of Misery*. A Moment's Experience would convince them, that *to be* was no otherwise a Perfection, than as it gave them a *Power of being happy*: But if they should still think it better *to be miserable*, than *not to be*, the Satisfaction of knowing themselves *to be* must over-balance the *Misery* they felt, and consequently the Author of their Being would have a Title to their Obedience, but his *Right* would be founded in his *Power* of making them more or less *miserable*, which confirms what I assert.

This will appear farther, if we consider the *Right* and *Power* of *obliging* that Men have, or pretend to have over one another; which must be all founded in their Power of contributing *to the Happiness or Misery* of one another.

It sometimes so happens, that some Men demand to be obeyed by others, when they have no Power, or ever will have, to reward their Obedience, or punish their Disobedience, so as to make it their Interest to obey them; upon which Account the *Right of obliging* is oftentimes looked upon as existing *separate* from the *Power of obliging*, but without Grounds.

For if God will judge every Man according to their Works, and the Persons requiring Obedience are commissioned by him, they have a *Power*, as well as a *Right* of obliging them to it; for they have a *Power* of proposing such Reasons as ought to determine them to obey; and consequently they have a *Power* of *contributing* to their Happiness or *Misery*, though they are not the *immediate Instruments* of it.

But if there be no God, then they usurp upon

on the Equality of Mankind, and have no more a *Right*, than they have a *Power of obliging*.

Another Instance there is, where the *Power of obliging* is, or may be exercised without the *Right*, and that is, when Men, by the Advantages of more *Skill* and *Strength* than others, *without any Authority from God*, command their Obedience.

In which Case, those that prescribe particular *Actions* to others have a *Power of obliging* them to obey, because they have a *Power of determining* them to *act*, by the Consideration of greater *Happiness* to be obtained, or *Misery* to be avoided; but they have *no Right* to use this *Power*, because they are *themselves* under greater *Obligations*, with *Respect to God*, *not to employ it*, than *those* upon whom it is exercised are, *with Respect to them*, to obey it: But if there be no God, then is their *Power* their *Right*.

From whence it follows, that wherever there is a *Right*, there is a *Power of obliging*; that where there is an *absolute uncontrollable Power of obliging*, there is also a *Right*. But where there is a *subordinate dependent Power of obliging*, it may be exercised without *Right*.

These Things being premised, I return to the Question, whether we are under any *Obligations to God*? Or whether there be any such Thing as *Religion*?

In order to prove which, I will

1. Shew that there is *one particular Way of acting*, which we are determined to *prefer to any other*; so that we cannot but like this *Way of acting*, and condemn the *contrary*; that we acknowledge, that what we thus *like*, we are obliged to do; and what we dislike, we are *not obliged to do*; and consequently we are *obliged to act* according to such *Judgments*.

That there are some natural *Notions* of *Right* and *Wrong*, *Good* and *Evil*, resulting from the *Natures* and

and Relations of Things, and that they are perceivable by the bare Use of our Reason, the greatest and wisest Part of Mankind have always owned; however, they may have differed in assigning which they were, and what were the true Grounds of them.

That there are some Things so clearly and fully proposed to the Mind, that a Man cannot deny his Assent to them; and that wherever this happens, there is the greatest Certainty, must readily be granted: Hence it follows, that we may be as certain that such or such Things ought, or ought not to be done, as that such or such Things are, or are not so and so related to one another.

For Instance, I may be as fully satisfied that I ought to desire my own Happiness, and that I ought not to take away another Man's, when I shall not add to my own, as, that every Thing that moves, is.

Several other moral Propositions might be deduced from these, that carry an irresistible Conviction with them. But the common Maxims of Morality have not in all respects the same Degree of Certainty; but how far they partake of it, I shall give an Account, and thence prove that we are necessarily determined to assent to these, and condemn the contrary of them: The highest and most general moral Duties are such as these.

That God is to be worshiped: That Parents are to be obeyed: That we ought to abstain from Intemperance, and provide Things necessary to Life: That we ought to do Injury to no Man, but contribute all we can to the Happiness of Mankind.

Such Propositions are found out by the Use of our natural Faculties.

The Relations indeed of moral Ideas, as well as the Ideas themselves, are learnt us first; but this is no Argument, that our Assent to such Propositions is the Effect of Education, because when we come up

up to review our *moral Knowledge* we got when Children, we shall be further satisfied of these Truths.

And take a Person entirely ignorant of these Matters, and inform him justly concerning *his own Nature, the Nature of God*, and what was meant by Worship, and all the *Notions contrary to it*; and then ask whether he would *worship*, or blaspheme that Being we call God? And who is there that would doubt of his chusing to worship him?

We have therefore the *same Reason* to conclude, that *moral Truths* are knowable the same Way that all other speculative Truths are.

And as to the Certainty of such Truths, it is *greater or less*, as the Propositions are *nearer or further* from the first general Rules of Morality; such as are those of *seeking our own Happiness*, and *not taking away another Man's*; and such as follow from these, as that we ought *to prefer a greater Good to a less*; the Evidence of which is as great as of any *Mathematical Axiom*.

But the other *moral Duties*, viz. the *Worship of God, Obedience to our Parents, &c.* have not the same Degree of Evidence; because the Certainty and Necessity of the Connection of those Actions with our own Happiness is not so clearly discoverable, that we immediately perceive it impossible it should be otherwise: But the *Evidence* of the above-mentioned *common Principles of Morality* is so great, that when they are fairly offered to the Understanding, we cannot refuse our Assent to them: And if so, there can be no Reason assigned why we should judge wrong, when there is nothing supposed to determine the Mind either Way; but the *Nature of the Ideas themselves* we judge of, and all Men in the same Circumstances necessarily judge the *same Way*; and then it follows, that these *moral Propositions* have the *same Degree of Evidence*, as any other, concerning Matters of *meer Speculation*. But

But the *Truth* or *Falshood* of these former depending upon their *Connection* with our *Happiness*, the *evidence* of them must be in *Proportion* with the *evidence* of this *Connection*.

Now the Reason we have to conclude that there is such a *Connection* between such *moral Actions* and our *Happiness*, so as to be persuaded that the *Performance* of these *Actions*, which without any *visible Relation* to our *Happiness* we prefer, will be attended with more *Pleasure* and less *Pain*, than such *Actions*, which, without any *Prospect* of *Misery*, we condemn, is this, we find in ourselves, we *desire* *Happiness*, and would *avoid Misery*. We find also, that *Happiness* and *Misery* are the only *Motives* of *Action*; and the obtaining one, and the *avoiding* the other, are the only *Ends* of our *Endeavours*. And therefore we cannot conceive that Beings of such a *Nature* should *necessarily* be *determined* to *approve* such *Actions* as tend to their *Misery*, and condemn those that would procure their *Happiness*.

Except therefore it can be proved that more *Misery* will attend the acting according to these *moral Rules*, than against them; the present *Approbation* of our *Judgment* is a *Proof* they are true; and if it is impossible to prove the contrary, then we are *necessarily determined* to make such *Judgments*; and we are thus determined to judge, we have the same *Reason* to conclude, that the *Observation* of such *moral Rules* as our *Reason* approves, will contribute more to our *Happiness*, than that it *condemns*: And consequently we are obliged so to *act*, as we have concluded, that what we are *necessarily determined* to give or refuse our *Assent* to, should be *true* or *false* accordingly.

Since therefore these *general Rules* of human *Action*, which are the *Foundations* of *Morality*, are found to be so very agreeable to *Reason*, that on a bare *Proposal* of them without any perceivable

able Relation to our Happiness, they command our Assent, it may be inferred from hence, that it would conduce more to our Happiness to act according to them, than to act otherwise; and consequently we are obliged to do so.

From all which it appears, that the *Certainty* of these *moral Axioms* which I placed under the second Rank falls very little short of the Evidence of those *first irresistible Judgments*, or rather *Impressions*, concerning our own *Happiness*, which are inseparable from our Nature, and from our Thoughts: for these are known in themselves by *immediate Intuition*, the same Way that those are; and if their Connection with our Happiness cannot properly be said to be known, either by *Intuition*, or *Demonstration*, yet that there is such a Connection is morally evident.

2. The next Step I am to make in the Proof of *Religion* is, to shew, that what our Reason approves or condemns, we are obliged by God to do, or not to do.

That we received our Beings from God, I have already proved; and therefore when we are necessarily determined to judge after such a Manner, we must conclude, that such a *Determination* is founded in our Frame, and consequently is a Work of God.

And since by our very Nature we find ourselves invincibly determined to seek after Happiness, and avoid Misery, we cannot but conclude, that Happiness is the ultimate End of our Being, and therefore we cannot conceive that God should make it necessary for us to aim at Happiness in all we do, and likewise make it necessary for us to approve our Actions, and judge ourselves obliged to do them, which would not tend to our Happiness.

As therefore we may be satisfied from the Nature of ourselves, and other Things, that what we are necessarily determined to judge to be done, or not to be done, is a right Judgment, because it is impossible

conceive we should be so *disposed*, with Relation to other Beings, and our own *Happiness*, as to be mistaken in the *clearest Perceptions*; so likewise when we consider ourselves and all other Beings made by God, we are more directly convinced of all other truths we find ourselves necessarily determined to assent to, the Nature of God being a full and express Warrant to us, that we *cannot be deceived* by him, and consequently, that we are not mistaken in any of those Judgments which we are necessarily determined to make, because 'tis God that determines

Thus it appears that God did design to oblige us to such a particular Way of acting, from the general Consideration of the Nature of Man, whereby he is necessarily determined to approve some Actions, and condemn others, and to do what he so approves, and what he ought not to do, condemn; and therefore we are obliged to obey the *Commands of God*, and our Nature, and pursue our Happiness by his directions.

But besides the express Judgment of our Reason, which he has given to lead us to Happiness, he has also given us such Capacities, by which we are enabled to know and perform such Actions as he requires; and has made us sensible of our Obligations, by giving us such Inclinations to those Actions he has obliged us to do.

Thus upon the Receipt of any Kindness we find our Souls disposed to all Acts of Love; and without considering that this is the Way to procure us more Advantage by being grateful, we break out into the external Actions that express the Sense of the favour. So when by Reasoning, or any visible indication of Power, we believe that such or such a Being is able to make us happy or miserable, we are immediately conscious of all the Sentiments of Love and Fear, and our outward Behaviour is suitable to

these inward Sentiments, without any *express Consideration*, that we shall thereby recommend ourselves to him.

Now 'tis plain in both these Cases, our *Actions* are not the *Effects of pure Reason only*, though they are found to be agreeable to it. For if we acted by *Reason only*, what need would there be of those *previous Sentiments* we feel? We might perform all the *outward Actions* upon a *bare rational Prospect* of the Advantages to be gotten; but if we look into ourselves, we shall be convinced, we do not reason ourselves into the Sentiments we feel on *those Occasions*. And if by the Unhappiness of our Temper, or any other Way, we should want these Sentiments of Gratitude and Reverence, we should find some Difficulty in reasoning ourselves into the *same outward Behaviour*, as would have followed, had we been *so affected*. And though we were never so well convinced that our *Happiness* was really concerned in such a Behaviour, all our Actions would come *slower*, than if they had proceeded from a *lively natural Sense*, till *Habit*, which is another Help to Reason, had given us greater Ease and Dispatch. All which Sentiments of the Soul being given us by God, and assisting us in discharging what we call the *Duties of Religion*, we conclude, that God did design us for the Practice of *such Duties*; that a Compliance to them will contribute to our *Happiness*; and that we are *actually under Obligation to God*; or that there is such a Thing as Religion. Which Obligations we are put in mind of by the *Constitution of human Society*. For whatever Reasons we alledge for our Duty to *Princes* and *Parents*, will conclude more strongly upon us when we consider ourselves *with Relation to God*.

If we think ourselves obliged to obey our *Princes*, because they have a Power to contribute to our *Happiness* or *Misery*, and because I consider him

more inclinable to do me good than ill, I think myself under *higher Obligations* to obey him.

God has all these Titles to our Obedience in the *highest Degree*; who can make us more happy or miserable than any Man; who has a greater Property in us by *Creation*, than Man can have by any other Way, and is more inclinable to do us good than ill, and actually does us more good than we can receive from any other.

3. All which Considerations concerning human society, are good Arguments that we are obliged to the Practice of Religion; and that the Practice of it will tend more to our *Happiness* than the *Neglect* of it, tho' we do not as yet perceive the Connection between *Religion* and *Happiness*.

'Tis plain upon a Comparison of the *human* and *divine Natures*, that *Man* was made by God for *Happiness*; and we are convinced by our *irresistible Desires of Happiness*, and *Aversions to Misery*, that the Enjoyment of the purest Happiness, must be the ultimate *End* of our *Being*, and our *Actions*.

Since therefore God has made us capable of, and designed us for such an *End*, and we find we necessarily aim at this *End*; since the Way to attain it is by our *Actions*; and we are assured by Experience, that all our *Actions* do not lead to this *End*, it follows that there must be one *particular Way* of acting, by which we may procure greater Happiness than by *any other*.

And farther, if we are *designed for Happiness*, and it be attainable by one particular Way of acting, 'tis certain that God who designed us for such an *End*, must design we should act *such a particular Way* as would conduct us thither.

In Conformity to which Designs, he has framed our *Mind in such a Manner*, that we judge ourselves obliged to do what we approve, and to avoid what we condemn, by giving us *such natural Propensions*

and *Aversions*, as dispose us to what Reason prescribes : And by *putting us into such a State of Life*, where the different Kinds of Government, and Subjection lead us to the Acknowledgment of God's Power, and the Necessity of our Obedience to him in all the several Instances of Duty, in which we are bound to any governing Relation among Men, but in a higher Degree, as becomes the great inequality between *God and Man*.

From whence we conclude, that all other Duties we are under, with respect to ourselves or others, are the Effect of our Obligation to God, who is the supreme Governor of the World, and from whom all other Power and Right are derived ; the Sense of which Obligation makes those Actions that are influenced by it, be termed religious, tho' God is not the *immediate Object of them*.

And these are sufficient Marks to shew, that God requires us to frame our Lives according to those Rules which are stiled *religious*, unless we can shew from more certain *Discoveries*, that *Religion* is not the Way to Happiness.

But that Religion is the Way to Happiness, we have proved. Besides, this appears from what we feel within ourselves ; we find a prodigious Satisfaction in those Actions, that both our Inclinations move us to, and impartial Reason approves ; and this is evident in the *due Performance* of any *religious Action*.

But to be satisfied further of the *real Connection* between Religion and Happiness, let us represent to ourselves another Generation of Men living in a *constant Exercise of Religion*.

This would be a State of *universal Peace, Safety and Love*. Their Obedience to God would engage his *Power and Wisdom* in their Favour ; and their *mutual Performance* of all the *Duties of Society* would render their Lives safe and happy.

These

These are the *true* and *necessary Effects* of Religion, and what greater Happiness than this can we, without a *larger Date* of *present Life*, or *Prospect* of *another*, conceive ourselves capable of? Or is attainable by any *other Actions*, besides those of Religion?

But this I confess may never be exemplified in the *reality of Things*; and therefore it does not follow, that while the generality of Men are evil, those few that are truly *religious*, shall enjoy more Happiness than others, much less *such*, whose *religious Practice* is *defective*.

However, thus much may justly be inferred, that Religion is in its *own Nature* *productive of Happiness*, and was designed by God for this Effect.

From whence, I conclude, that if Man was made for *Happiness*, and *directed* to seek it in Religion, which is in its *own Nature* *sufficient*, but by some Way or other, *rendered ineffectual for the present*; from hence I conclude, that there will be a *future State*, where a *full and exact* Observance of Religion shall be rewarded.

We have Reason also to hope, that our sincere Endeavours, tho' we sometimes transgress, will notwithstanding by some Favour of God, procure us a *State of Happiness*.

4. But this we are sure of, that God will *distinguish* between those, who *sometimes sin*, and those who *constantly* do so.

Here then I am to shew, that the *Defect* of a *regular Practice* of Religion, and the Consequences of this *Defect*, do necessarily lead us to the Acknowledgment of such a *future State*, as is sufficient to determine us to prefer one particular Way of Life before another.

'Tis plain that Religion is not *universally* practised in the World; 'tis manifest that they who do practise it, do in many Instances *neglect* it, and *act contrary*

trary to it. Upon which Account, as there is more Misery in the World than otherwise would be, so it often happens, that the *religious* Man has the *greatest Share*.

Nor is all the Misery he feels the *Effect* of *vicious Habits*, but laid upon him by bad Men, *purely for his being religious*; so that did he *perfectly* fulfill his Duty to God, his *Misery* would be as much increased as it was in their Power to do it.

From whence it follows, that there is *another State*, in which God will recompense good Men for all their Misery so as to justify their Obedience to him upon such Terms.

For if God *designed Man for Happiness*, and appointed *Religion to be the Means* to it, it is impossible he should so order it, that the *most religious* should be the *most unhappy*.

When therefore very good Men are tormented *barely* upon account of their *Religion*, we must then conclude that God has *Blessings in store* for them, in Comparison of which the *present Sufferings* are *nothing*.

From hence also we may infer, that those who have fewer Degrees of Religion, and yet have been punished by bad Men for those Degrees, will some Time or other receive *more Happiness*, or *less Misery* than others, proportionably to the Difference of their *Obedience* and *Affliction now*: Or, if no Reward be due but to a full Discharge of all Obligations, it cannot be imagined, that those who have endeavoured at *general Obedience* should be punished as high as those who have been guilty of a *total Neglect*.

However therefore it be as to the *Manner* of it, 'tis agreeable to the Wisdom of God to make good Men more happy than the Wicked, which would not be if there were *no Life after this*. And therefore there must be a *future State*.

The Certainty of which we are farther convinced by the general *Wants, Miseries, and Imperfections* of our present Nature, which proceed from a Principle within us, contrary to that of Religion; which Principle is the Reason of that *universal Wickedness* which is in the World.

Did Mankind enjoy all the Happiness they were otherwise capable of *here*, yet so long as they desired *more*, which they had no Hope of, and were *uneasy* to part with what they *possessed* by *Death*, they might reasonably conclude, that God *designed them* for *some more perfect State*, where all their *Desires* should be *satisfied*; or he would not have given them *Sense* of any *other*. Because in such a Case, their Capacities and Desires would have been given them *vain*; which does not seem consistent with the Wisdom of God; and moreover, the *Uneasiness* of *desiring* what was impossible, and the painful *Fears* of what was certain, would appear inconsistent with *God's Design of making Man for Happiness*; and therefore if there is no future State, it would be more agreeable to our Notions of God, not to have given Man a Sense of any other, which would have made him live without desiring any more than he enjoyed, and died without any Fears of losing what.

And if there is good Ground to believe there would be a *State of future Happiness*, though Men enjoyed *all they were capable of here*, because our Desires would exceed our Enjoyments, how much more reasonable is it to make the same Conclusion now, when we *fall short of the Happiness* the Condition of this *Life* would allow us. And from hence I think that there will be *another State of pure complete Happiness*, answerable to the highest Notions we can frame of it.

But since God has made Happiness and Misery to depend upon a particular *Way of acting*; the Happiness

Happiness of *another State* will be only the Portion of the *Religious*.

And if there are none *perfect*, yet 'tis more reasonable to conclude, that those who *sincerely endeavour* to be so, shall by God's Grace be made *happy*, than to believe all Mankind shall be miserable.

Granting therefore that we shall be *happy* or *miserable hereafter*, according as we have been good or *wicked*, it is more for our Happiness to be *religious*, and then we are obliged to live so, which was the Thing to be proved.

Nay further, if besides the *natural Pleasure* which results from *religious Acts*, God has given us a *certain Prospect* of a *happier State*, I dare assert, that though the Sufferings of some Men upon Account of Religion may exceed the noble Satisfaction Religion can afford them *here*, yet Religion *will prove the surest Way to Happiness, even in this Life*, reckoning in the *Hopes and Prospect only*, and *not the Possession of another State*.

4. Having given a positive Proof of Religion drawn from the *Natures and Relations* of the Beings concerned in it, I shall now evince the Truth of Religion from a *Comparison* of it with *Irreligion*, and the necessary Consequences arising from thence.

In order to which I shall consider the several Degrees of *Irreligion*, and what are the peculiar Consequences of *each*.

Irreligion considered as Belief or Opinion, is of three Sorts.

1. For either Men deny the Being of a God, and all *religious Duties*:

2. Or they acknowledge a God, but deny we are *obliged* to worship him:

3. Or else they own they are in several Instances *obliged* to worship him, but do not believe a *future State of Rewards and Punishments*.

If we examine the *Consequences* of these different

Notions, they all aim at a *general Liberty* of living as they please.

But let us consider these Notions apart, and then we shall the better perceive what the *immediate Consequences* of each Opinion are, and how they fall in with one another.

First then, we will suppose *there is no God* and *no Religion*, which being supposed, these two Things do necessarily follow.

1. That all Men are *equal*, and there is no such Thing as *Superiority*, *Right*, or *Authority* of any Kind.

2. That every Man is to act as he himself shall judge most convenient for his own *Happiness*.

1. That *all Men are equal* is very plain, if we consider them without any *external Advantages* of Birth, Education and Society: Nor do these Differences without a God, cause such an *Inequality*, as to make one Man *subject* to another.

For no Man can have such a *certain uncontrollable Power* over another, as to make it *necessary* for him to prefer such a particular Way of acting which he prescribes.

For what a Man promises or threatens may never take Effect: Besides, whatever is promised or threatened, being of no longer Continuance than Life, a Man may have some particular Enjoyment, that nothing *pleasant*, or *grievous* in Life, could determine him to a contrary Choice.

Thus Men of *no Religion* have sacrificed all they had, rather than renounce their *Ambition*, or *Revenge*, or stain what they thought their *Glory*.

From whence it follows, that without a God, no Man can have a *Right of obliging* another. That being founded in *such a Power* of contributing to the *Happiness* or *Misery* of another, as his *Reason* must necessarily submit to, when 'tis made use of.

It may indeed so happen, that a Man may propose

pose to me to act after such a Manner, as I may judge more conducive to my Happiness, than to act otherwise; but this does not give him a Right to my Obedience: Therefore I look upon the Governors of Society not as having a *Right* over me; but I follow their Counsels oftner than those of others, because I judge it more for *my Interest*; but if I think it better to follow my own Opinion, or any other Man's, then I am as much obliged to act accordingly; and in such a Case, the Person whose Advice I take, has as much *Right* over me, as my *Father* or *Prince*.

All which Titles, if there *be no God*, are false imposing Names.

We must discard likewise those false Notions of *Right* and *Property*. For all Men being *equal*, have an *equal Right* to every Thing they are capable of enjoying or possessing; nor can any *Priority* of *Possession*, *Contract*, or *Agreement* whatsoever, be sufficient to found a Right to the Exclusion of any other Man; which will appear if

2. We consider, that, supposing there be no *God* or *Religion*, every Man is to act as he himself shall judge convenient for his own *Happiness*.

There's no other Motive of Action imaginable in such a Case. And if all Men do act according to this Principle, they must judge that there is no such Thing as *Authority* or *Duty*, *Right* or *Property*, nor any Action of *their own*, or *other Men*, or any other *Circumstance* or *Relation* whatsoever, that can be any Bar to any Man's Endeavours of bettering his Condition, or advancing his Happiness, when and in what Manner soever he shall think fit.

And that they do so act, Reason and Experience assure us.

1. That we naturally endeavour our own Happiness, whether *there be a God* or no.

2. That

2. That if there be *no God*, no Man can be conceived to have such a Pre-eminence of Power above another, that, if he will, *he* can certainly contribute so far to his Happiness or Misery, that it must needs be better for him to act that particular Way he prescribes, and that the Person thus prescribed cannot help thinking so.

And if no Man has such a Power, there are no other Beings, that *without a God*, should have more Power over us, than *one Man* has over another.

From whence it follows, that every *Man* being necessarily determined to act for his own Happiness, and no Man having Power enough to make the Obedience of another to him the certain Way to his Happiness, and therefore no Man is obliged to act according to the Will of another, any further than he himself judges, he shall be happier for so acting.

And if we consider further how small the *Differences of Power* are among Men, what reciprocal Advantages they have over one another, how *changable* all these Circumstances are, and what different *Notions* Men have of the *Happiness of this Life*, we shall still be more satisfied that there can be no such Thing as *Authority* or *Subjection*, *Obligation*, *Right* and *Property*.

Supposing then that all Men in Society had worn off these *Notions of God and Religion*, and every Man was prepared to act what he thought conducive to his Happiness, it would follow, that many Men would want many Things; and nothing but the *Sense of Danger* could hinder them from seizing what they wanted; but their Numbers being so many, they would join together in bringing Things to an Equality; and those who had been entertained with the Pride and Elegance of Living, would endeavour to support the *Difference of their Condition*.

This

This would be the Effect of a full *Establishment* of Irreligion in the World, if we consider that the greatest Part of all human Societies undergo a great many Troubles in *supplying their own Wants*, and in *ministring* to the *Ease and Pleasure of others*.

But let us suppose Men united together upon what Terms we please, yet if they believed no God nor Religion, there would be nothing but Confusion and Misery; for every Man being to act for his own Happiness, and there being as many Notions of Happiness as there are different *Passions* and *Inclinations*, every one's Happiness would clash with one another, which must end in the worst State of War.

If it be asserted, that the *Advantages of Society* and *Union* are so great, that Men would readily agree to observe all such Things as tend to the *common Preservation of Society*; I answer, that this would be sufficient to Persons who had felt these Inconveniences, to enter into Society upon such Terms as seemed to conduce to their particular Happiness; but if afterwards the *breaking* these Terms would conduce more to their Happiness, they are as much obliged to break them, as they were to make them.

He therefore that is a *thorough Atheist*, must look upon all the Notions of *Government*, *Right*, and *Property*, as the *Devices* of cunning Men, that by putting others under *such Restraints*, they might enjoy the greater *Liberty*; or as *useless Inventions*, which leave Men to act as if there were no such Notions.

He must look upon himself as the Judge of his own Happiness; and being assured that *every Man* else is the *same*, he is not to expect that any Man will contribute to his *Happiness* any further than it is for his own *Interest*; nor must they expect it from him.

In the Pursuit of his Happiness, which is, in the Enjoyment of the *greatest Pleasure*, he must act whatever he thinks conducive to that *End*; and so

he knows must other Men, be their Notions of Happiness never so different from *his*. Upon which Account he must acknowledge all *Actions* are of the *same Nature*, because there is no *Kind of Action* but may contribute either to the *Happiness* or *Misery* of some Man, or to *both*, when considered with Respect to several Persons, or with Respect to the same Person at different Times. And consequently he must grant, there can be no *certain Rules* of acting, which will certainly procure any Man that follows them *more Happiness* than he could obtain by any *other Means*; but the same Man must be obliged oftentimes to act *contrary ways*, and pursue the *same End*, by the *most opposite Methods*; and if he is disappointed by the interfering Pursuits of others, he must *change his chief Pleasure*, or be unhappy for sticking to his former Choice.

Further, he must not be deterred from the Prosecution of his Ends by any *Concern* for the *Happiness of others*, or *Sense of their Misery*, or by any *Regard* to what they think of him.

He is never to prefer the *publick Good* to his own *private Satisfaction*. He must have no *Generosity*, *Friendship*, and *Gratitude*, but when they serve his *Interest*. He must lay aside all *Pity*, when the *Sufferings of others* procure him *more Happiness*.

He is to look upon *Honour* and *Reputation* as *empty Names*, when applied to any thing but advancing a Man's *own Interest*. And therefore nothing that serves this *End* is to be accounted *base*. But if the World agrees to call some Things so, he must comply with the established Error, so far only as it *stands in his Way to Happiness*, or *Helps to promote it*.

Lastly: Being sensible that this Life is the *Extent of his Happiness*, he is to have no *Regard* to *Posterity*, or their Advantage by abating any thing of his present Satisfaction; nor care if the Race of Mankind should end with him.

This

This is a *Representation* of the Faith and Practice of one that denies the *Being of a God* upon a full *Persuasion of Mind*.

What I have said of *Atheism* is applicable to all manner of *Deism*, which is such an Acknowledgment of God, that does not include Religion in it. For if the *Deist* affirms that God *requires nothing* of him, he is at full *Liberty* to *chuse* for himself, and prosecute his own *Happiness* as he thinks fit, which is the Case of the *Atheist*.

'Tis the same Thing, in Effect, with those that make God a *necessary Cause*, and Men *necessary Agents*. For according to this Opinion all Actions are *alike*; and then there can be no general Rules for Men to act by: Which is *Atheism* too.

As to those who allow a God and some Sort of Providence, but deny a *future State*, there is more *Credibility* in their Opinion, but their Practice is very near the *same* with the others. For if we believe that human Affairs have gone on from the Beginning without any *sensible Interposition* of Providence, as they who deny *Revelation* believe: If, I say, we are of this Opinion, and observe how wicked Men flourish all their Lives, and good Men suffer upon the Account of their Goodness, what Force can slight Sentiments of Religion have upon us, when the present Happiness may be promoted by acting contrary to it, and we have nothing to fear after Death?

Thus I have given a true Account of all Kind of *Irreligion*, and shewn the Effects of it, with respect to the Happiness of Mankind.

And now upon a fair Comparison of *Religion* and *Irreligion*, and the *Consequences* of them, Religion must needs be not only more agreeable to the Interest of Mankind in general, but is more conducive to the Happiness of particular Men.

He that is *truly religious*, enjoys the World more, because

because his Desires are more contracted, and his Wants less, than another; and he is less obnoxious to Envy, Ambition, or Covetousness, than the prosperous wicked Man.

He is not eager in the Pursuit of necessary Supports and lesser Conveniences of Life, and avoids all manner of Injury of others, and therefore must be free from the Effects of Anger, Malice, and Revenge, and such as rob others to advance their Fortune.

He professes to promote the Happiness of others, and therefore will find others ready to assist him. Whereas he that acts for himself only, will receive no Assistance; but where others Interest is interwoven with his.

Lastly: The Happiness the religious Man proposes to himself in another Life is such as must afford him greater Pleasure than the Hopes of any other Enjoyment in this; as this Hope is more durable in the Possession, and the present Assurance of it less liable to Disappointment, there being no external Accidents or Endeavours that can deprive us of it.

This is sufficient for the Proof of Religion.

I shall in the next Place,

V. Consider the Grounds and Pretences of Irreligion, and shew the Folly of them.

In Prosecution of which Subject I shall,

1. Enquire how far Irreligion is capable of being proved.

2. Consider the common Methods of defending it.

3. Answer some principal Objections against Religion.

1. I am to enquire how far Irreligion is capable of Proof; that is, how far a Man is able to prove there is no God, no Obligation of acting such a Way, or that there be; or no future State of Happiness or Misery.

Was a Man disposed to believe these Propositions,
Vol. I. R or

or had a Mind to convince others of the Truth of them, there is no other Way of doing it, but by shewing their *Repugnancy to our Reason*, and those other *Principles of our Knowledge* which we cannot possibly doubt of.

The first Way we *demonstrate* them to be certain.

The latter we make them appear *probable*.

As to *Demonstration*, there's no Way of demonstrating a Thing *not to be*, but by proving 'tis *impossible to be*; and who will undertake to convince the World, that 'tis impossible there should be *God*? Or supposing there be, that *Religion* and *future State* are downright *Contradictions*?

All that remains then to be done is, to produce such Arguments for the *Doctrines of Irreligion*, shall render them agreeable to our Minds: So that upon a fair Proposal, we shall easily be inclined to embrace and assent to them, tho' the Evidence is not so strong as irresistibly to determine us.

This we call arguing from *Probability*, which is nothing else but an *Appeal to the common Reason of Mankind*, which in Matters of *pure Reflection*, deduced from the *first Principles of Knowledge*, which is common to all Men, is a very good Rule or *Measure of Probability*. But Irreligion will not stand this Test, the wise Part of the World have constantly rejected them.

But supposing Men were to chuse their Opinions again; how would a Man go about to prove more agreeable to Reason, that there should be *God*, no *Religion*, nor *future State*, than that there should be any of these? His Arguments must be drawn either from our own *Existence*, or from Things without us.

We are certain *we are*, tho' we know not how we came at first *to be*. We perceive many Things *without us*, but know not how they came to exist.

therefore more likely that there should be no such perfect Author of these Things, than that there should be such a Being? Can we from the Course of Nature infer, there is no governing Hand? Can we from the Disposition of our Minds, prove that we are under no Law of acting? Or that Religion is destructive of our Happiness? Can we think it unreasonable that we shall live again, and be rewarded or punished accordingly as we have behaved?

However true these Things may, or are supposed to be in themselves, they will by no Means follow from the forementioned Principles; for if God, Religion, and a future State are all possible, the real Existence of any Thing else, will never furnish any Argument for their Non-existence.

2. In vain then do we expect any direct Proof of Irreligion. In the next Place I shall consider the usual Methods of defending it, which are these.

1. Ridiculing Religion.

2. Requiring a more mathematical Proof of it.

3. Endeavouring to shew the Possibility of Things subsisting without it, and raising some loose Objections against it, which aim at the present Promotion and Practice of it.

As to the first of these; as the generality of Men cannot give any Reason for their Irreligion, I shall consider such Persons in another Place.

The next Pretence to justify their Infidelity, is by alleging that the Doctrines of Religion have not any certain mathematical Proof.

To which I answer,

That it is absurd to call for more Proofs because they have confuted what is already advanced. And in the next Place, 'tis ridiculous to ask for a Kind of Proof than the Nature of the Thing

244 *The Certainty and Necessity*

will bear. For indeed, Persons that call for *mathematical* Proof in Religion, will allow of no such Thing as *Demonstration* any where, but in *Figures* and *Numbers*: Whereas in the present Subject we have as clear Notions of *Knowledge*, *Will*, *Power*, and *Duration*, as we have of *Numbers* and *Figures*.

In the Proof of a God this is very plain; and in the *Obligations of Religion*, and a *future State* will not be allowed to have the *same Degree of Evidence*, yet *they have all the Certainty 'tis conceivable they should have* by Way of Deduction from any Ideas our Minds are furnished with; so that supposing them true, they cannot be proved any otherwise from *bare unassisted Reason*; and therefore it is unjust to require a further Demonstration of them when the *rational Grounds* they stand upon, cannot be overthrown by contrary Proofs.

But besides all this, where we are under a Necessity of judging one Way, as where it concerns our Happiness to *act* or *not to act*, 'tis foolish not to be determined by that degree of Evidence, whatever it be that appears on one side, when there is none on the other.

3. But others endeavour to explain the *Original Disposition*, and *Conduct* of Things, without a God, and have invented *Hypotheses* for that Purpose.

But what are *Fate*, *Necessity*, *Chance* and *universal Soul*, but Covers for Ignorance? The true Result of which Principles is a *new Sort of Creation* where all Things are made by *Nothing*.

But if those that use any of these Names mean the *Maker* of all Things, a Being *distinct* from the *Things made*, such a Being cannot be conceived without those glorious Attributes which make our Idea of God, as I have proved before.

But should we allow the Atheist's *Scheme of Things* to be *possible*, yet it can never justify the Defence of it, unless they can make it appear more *reasonable* and *fit to be believed* than that which obtains, which none of them ever ventured at.

And the same may be said to others that acknowledge a God, but without a *Religion* or a *future State*.

For they cannot say that God who made the World cannot govern it ; that he that made Man, cannot require him to *act* as he *pleases*, or cannot make him happy or miserable in a future State, and as long as he *pleases*.

Nor can they prove 'tis more agreeable to the Nature of God, and all those Notions we have of him and ourselves, that he should not exercise his Power after this Manner, than that he *should*.

The Arguments by which they would prove that *it is possible* God may not do all this we conceive of him, are drawn from the supposed *Materiality* and *Mortality* of the Soul.

Here lies the *principal Strength* of *Irreligion* : But 'tis plain to any Man that duly considers these Notions, that 'tis impossible to prove that the Soul is not distinct from *Matter* and *Motion* ; and that it cannot *subsist* after the *Dissolution* of the *Body*. All that can be said is, that we cannot certainly demonstrate the Soul and Body to be *two distinct Substances* ; no Men have been more disposed to believe *this*, than the *contrary Opinion* ; and 'tis demonstrable, that what we attribute to the Soul, is not any *Mode* of the *Qualities* we ascribe to the *Body*.

Allowing then that the Soul and Body may be united in one common Subject, and that the Soul dies with the Body, which is as much as can be allowed : But then God may, if he pleases, put us together again after Death, and so that we shall know ourselves again ; and that he will do so, we have Reason to think, from what has been proved : Therefore if the Soul should be granted to be *material* and *mortal*, we should have the same Reason to believe that he does *require us to act* after such a Manner, and will *reward or punish* us in *another Life*, according as we behave in *this*.

I come now to answer the *chief* and *most common* *Objections* against *Religion*.

Some object that there are *Mysteries*, *Inconsistencies*, and *Absurdities* in *Scripture*; the *Weakness* of which *Objections*, as they are made Use of to weaken the *Credibility* of *all Religion*, I shall expose with their *Consequences*, which are these.

Such a *Passage* in *Scripture* I cannot understand; therefore this *Passage* is false; therefore the *Book* is false; therefore there is *no God*, or *Religion*, or *no future State*.

The next Thing objected against the *Truth* of *Religion* is, several *pernicious* and *absurd Doctrines* maintained under the *Name of Religion*.

Some Men place all their *Religion* in *Shew*, therefore, says the *Atheist*, all *Religion* is *Priest-craft*, and *all Scripture Legend*.

Superstition has produced as horrid *Consequences*, as the wild *Liberties* of *Atheism* could do, but *Religion* is no more the *Occasion* of one than the other, and therefore unjustly condemned upon this *Account*.

Another foolish *Objection* is the *Variety* of *Opinions* among the *Professors* of *Religion*, and their *peremptory Censures* of one another.

And because of this, therefore the *Irreligious* will deny what no body else does, and what all the *different Parties* agree in. And what *Contradiction* is this, to make *Unity of Consent* the *Character* of *Truth*, and yet allow no *Opinions* to be true, but those that have the *least Pretence* to it?

Neither is it more reasonable to condemn *all Religion*, upon the *Account* of the *weak Defence* of *some of its Professors*.

Another unwarrantable *Occasion* of *Irreligion* is, the *scandalous Practices* of *Men* of great *Pretences* to *Piety*.

For it does not follow, that these Men believe nothing

nothing themselves; the truer Inference is, that corrupt Nature is too hard for Reason.

For there's no Man, though ever so profligate, but does many times Things he condemns himself for: And therefore for a Man to infer from some gross Sins of a Pretender to Religion, that believes nothing, is as absurd as to prove an Atheist believes a God, because he often swears by him.

Besides, suppose this true of some Men, what Reason have we to conclude that all are of the same Mind? Or what if there be a great many Pretenders to Religion? How is this an Argument against the Truth of it?

But if the Generality of Men, says the Unbeliever, believe the Religion they profess, it is the Effect of Fear and Education; which few Men have been able to shake off. To which it may be sufficient to answer, that I have already proved Religion to be the Product of Reason, and therefore whatever else is assigned as the Cause of it, must be false.

But I have these further Considerations to add, viz. that the Effects of Fear and Education never are so uniform and lasting, as the Belief of Religion is observed to be, especially when they act contrary to Truth, as they are supposed to do in this Case. That Men are as much disposed to deny as to believe what they fear, when the Reasons for Fear are the same, and more inclined to the former, when the Things to be feared are represented at a great Distance. That sensual Appetites have a much stronger Influence upon the Judgments of Men, than such Impressions of Fear, which contradict these. And therefore nothing but the Reason and Evidence of the Things believed can be the Cause of the general Belief of Religion.

The last Objection is, that Religion is a politic Contrivance.

248 *The Certainty and Necessity*

And for this Reason, viz. because it is promoted by Politicians in every Country. But this is so far from being a Plea for Atheism, that it is a strong Argument for the *Truth, Reasonableness, and Necessity of Religion*: For that is certainly highly rational which is most suitable and agreeable to the *public Reason of Mankind*. And if Men are born sociable Creatures, and Society cannot subsist without Religion, then is Religion as agreeable to the Nature of Man, and as necessary to his Happiness, as Conversation and living together.

These are the chief *Pleas, Defences and Objections* urged against Religion,

I pass on,

VI. To give some Account of the Causes of all *Atheism*.

Having, as I persuade my self, fully proved the Truth of Religion, I may now be allowed to say, that all *Atheism* must be the sole Effect of *Prejudice and Prepossession*.

And if we search the Heart of Man, and consider the several Arts which are used by Men to delude themselves, we shall soon discover the secret Spring of *Atheism*, and *Unbelief*.

Now the *Causes* of it are these two. *The Fear of an after Reckoning for a wicked Life*: And the *Vanity of appearing greater and wiser than other Men*.

It cannot be the *Evidence of Truth*, as appears not only from the foregoing *Proofs of Religion*, but from the Confession of Atheists themselves. It is not because the Notions of a *God* and a future State contradict Reason, that they deny Religion. Were they not obliged to *serve God*, they would not scruple to *own him*. God should also enjoy Fulness of *Perfection*, provided he would not take an Account of our *Actions*. This it is that makes Men deny what they fear, when they are resolved to run the Hazard of it.

Lucretius

Lucretius confesses this was the whole Design of his Philosophy, which will further confirm what I have undertaken to maintain, as will appear from these following Remarks.

For, first, this Philosopher observes, that the Fears of Death were general.

2. That these Fears were occasioned by an *Apprehension of some other State after this*.

3. That those who are stiled *wicked* were afraid of a *future State*. And all his Arguments serve only for the Consolation and Encouragement of such Wretches, who either denied themselves some present Gratification, through Fear of future Pain; or were uneasy under the Guilt of past Actions.

From which 'tis plain, that a Resolution to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin is the Reason why Men would overthrow those Opinions which would otherwise be embraced as most rational.

For the universal Apprehension of a future State, he intimates, is no slight Argument of the Truth of it. As the strong Fears of the wicked is a Proof of the real Difference between Good and Evil, and the Dueness of the Reward and Punishment. For otherwise why do the wicked condemn themselves for what they do? Or supposing a future State, why should they expect to be punished in it? If it be Wisdom to live as they do, what need they fear?

Now when Men are resolved to commit what they know to be wrong, there is no Refuge left, but to contrive some Way to escape the Punishment threatened; and this they promise themselves, either by denying the Judge, or the Place of Punishment. And this is the Cause of Atheism. For no Man ever denied a future State, that thought Happiness would be his Portion in it.

As then it is not a Zeal for Truth that makes Men Atheists, so neither is it a generous Undertaking to free Men from the Bondage of Religion. For they

they must allow that it would be better for the World, if Mankind were all *religious*. And what *Bondage* is there in Religion? Nothing but what is preferable to Atheism, supposing no future State. Why then do they complain of what they never feel the Weight of? But there are Pleasures they are resolved to enjoy, which they cannot do, without some Damp, till they have got rid of those Fears of a future Punishment their own Consciences threaten them with; therefore every *little Objection* is improved into an Argument against Religion, till at last they come boldly to *deny a God*.

And then do *Novelty* and *Boldness* pass for *Truth*, and the *Pleasure of believing* is the Ground of *Faith*. For how transporting is the Pleasure of a *new Notion*? and to get the Character of Men that *think out of the Road*?

Besides the ridiculing *common Opinions* that are much respected, carries a peculiar Satisfaction in it, there being nothing that recommends a Stroke of Wit more than the Boldness of it: Thus an Expression is counted prodigious witty, when it strikes at *God*. And to ridicule the greatest Actions, is thought to argue a Spirit capable of greater Performances. And to condemn what the rest of Mankind stand in Awe of, seems to shew such a Superiority of Sense and Courage, as tempts Men to affect this Character, without considering whether they can support it.

These are the true Causes of Atheism; and that the Belief of the Doctrines of Irreligion is the Result of Prejudice, will appear further from the following Reflections.

1. Atheists or Deists, whether *real* or *pretended*, are generally Persons of no great *Reach*; but Men of strong Lusts, and irregular Imaginations, without a due Ballast of Reason.

If some of them have more *natural* Sense, it is

uncul-

uncultivated: Or if they have made any Advances in Knowledge by Study, they have either begun late, and applied themselves to Books without Direction; or else they have been conversant in such Studies as have by no means qualified them to be Judges of their own Way.

For a Man may be well versed in *History*, *Criticism*, and *Oratory*, and yet in Matters of *general* and *abstracted Reasoning*, not be able to understand a plain Consequence.

Now this is a Part of Knowledge the *Favourers of Irreligion* have been the greatest Strangers to; and the less they have been acquainted with this Kind of Learning, the more confident Atheists they have been.

2. The *Atheists* commonly believe first, before they enter upon any *Examination* of *Proof* of their Principles. And if an Atheist will examine fairly into the first Rise of his *Faith*, he will find it was occasioned by *high Blood* and a *raised Imagination*, or some *bold Strain of Wit*, that struck him when he was disposed to be pleased with it, and not from the Result of his own calm and sedate Reflections.

And thus, as *Irreligion* springs from *Prejudice*, so it is *nourished* the same Way by a constant Application to such Books and Company as give it Countenance, and ridiculing the contrary, by magnifying every *bold Thing* that is said by any Man against Religion, or the Professors of it.

From whence it comes to pass, that the present *Atheism* is a *promiscuous Miscellany* of all the *bold Notions* that have been vented by those they style *Freethinkers*; where, whatever is against Religion, is embraced as *rational*; but those Parts of Religion that are established by these same Authors, are slighted. And what a gross Partiality is this, not to allow those whom they cry up for *unprejudiced Men*, to talk a Word of Sense, but when it makes for their Purpose?

3. We

3. We have a more convincing Proof, that the *Doctrines of Irreligion* are the Effects of Prejudice, from the Confession of Atheists themselves, who, having disclaimed their Atheism, have freely own'd that they threw off Religion, without considering the Proofs of it : That they were disposed to entertain irreligious Notions by the Power and Influence of their *Lusts* : That commonly the strongest Impressions of Unbelief were occasioned by some bold Hints, or some witty Ridicule upon the Subject of Religion : And these were Men of the best *natural Abilities*, and the *greatest acquired Improvements* of any that ever took the Party of *Atheism*, who were not forced to own this by any human Persuasion, or for fear of Punishment.

And this I think sufficient to shew, that Atheism proceeds from *strong Prejudices*, and is not the Result of just Reasoning.

I have now finished the Proof I undertook of *general*, or, as 'tis commonly called, *natural Religion*.

All that I have further to do is, to give some Account of the Notions of *Atheism* and *Deism*, which Words I have used promiscuously.

By an Atheist is commonly meant, one who believes *no God*. And in this Sense of the Word it may be a Question, whether there be an *Atheist* in the World? For 'tis hard to find a Man who has not some Idea in his Mind which he will allow the Name of *God* to, though perhaps it will be found nothing else but a confused Notion of *some vast Power, first Cause, original Mover, or immortal Being enjoying eternal Rest and Quiet*.

Now according to this Notion of *Atheism*, he who believes a God and denies his Providence is called a *Deist*.

But where Revelation is own'd, he that is call'd a *Deist* is one who believes *some Sort of Providence*,

ence, but denies *Revelation*; who practises *Justice* for his own *Advantage* and *Interest of Society*, not in *Obedience to God*, or a *future Prospect*, because he believes no *future Life*. This is the *common Use* of these Words.

But by an *Atheist*, I think, may be meant, not only he that absolutely denies the *Being* of a *God*, but whoever says, *there is no God that governs the World, or will punish or reward Men hereafter, according to their Actions here*.

For *Atheism* is to be considered as a *Vice*, and not a *meer Error in Speculation*. And 'tis all one with Respect to Practice, to say, *there is no God*, as to say, *there is no Obedience due to him, or no Punishment for Disobedience*, if there be. For the End of these Opinions is to establish a *Liberty for every Man to live as he pleases*; and what is this, but to say, *there is no God*?

This is the Notion I have of an *Atheist*, and accordingly I have applied it to any Person that denied any of the *Principles of Religion* I have endeavoured to establish. And I have used the Word *Deist* in the same Sense, but where I am concerned in the Proof of *God's Being*, as distinguished from the other Parts of Religion.

But here in Opposition to the Character I have now given of an *Atheist*, by a *Deist* is to be meant one, who acknowledges *all the Principles of Religion here maintained*, but does not believe *Revelation*, or those *peculiar Doctrines that are discoverable by it*.

And, if a *Deist* be such a one, I don't know whether there be any, at least I believe it would be very difficult in a Christian Country to find a Man who was acquainted with the *Scriptures*, and the common Proofs of *Christianity*, who was persuaded of the *Principles of natural Religion*, and seriously endeavoured to practise the moral Precepts of the Gospel,

Gospel, and yet denied *Revelation*, and those particular Truths which are distinguished by the Name of *revealed Religion*.

For 'tis not Prophecies, or *Miracles*, or Mysteries, that shock such Men, but the *plain* and *full* *Discovery* of a *future State* of *Rewards* and *Punishments*.

Upon this Account it is that I have several times mentioned the *Deists* as Enemies of natural Religion, and so properly coming within my Subject, and not as meer *Opposers* of *Revelation*, which belongs to another Argument.

Dr. *HARRIS*'s
REFUTATION
OF THE
Atheistical Objections
AGAINST THE
BEING and ATTRIBUTES
OF A
G O D,
ABRIDG'D.

DR. HARRIS'S

REFUTATION

OF THE

Altheistical Objections

AGAINST THE

Being and Attributes

OF A

GOD

ABRIDGED

Dr. HARRIS's REFUTATION

OF THE

Atheistical Objections against the BE-
ING and ATTRIBUTES of a GOD.

PSALM X. 4.

*The Wicked, through the Pride of his Countenance,
will not seek after God : Neither is God in all his
Thoughts.*

IN these Words, we have an Account by what Steps Men advance to such an Height of Wickedness, as to set up for Atheism, which I shall consider in their Order.

I. The general Character of the Person the *Psal-*
ist speaks of, is, that *he is a wicked Man.*

II. The particular Kind of Wickedness is *Pride.*

III. Here is the *Charge* brought against him, *viz.*
Wicked Atheism. He will not seek after God.

I. *He is a wicked Man. The Wicked thro' Pride,*
&c.

'Tis very natural to conclude, that those who are
debauched in their *Practices*, may easily grow so in
their *Principles.*

'Tis very likely for a Man that is daily obnoxious
to the divine Vengeance, and yet unwilling to
leave his Sins, to catch at any Thing that can help
him to shake off those dreadful Apprehensions. Ac-
cordingly some drown themselves in continual Ex-
cesses,
Vol. I. S

cesses, and so come to believe nothing of Religion, because they never *think* about it. Others, who have some Smattering of Learning, will pretend to defend their Wickedness by Argument. Sometimes they will wrest Scripture to justify their Actions: At other Times they quote the Examples of some great Men in Scripture, as a Licence to them to Sin, without considering their Penitence. Sometimes they dispute the Eternity of Hell Torments, and the Immortality of the Soul. Now they argue for *Fate*, and pretend there is no Harm in what they do, because they are necessitated to every Thing they commit. But as Scripture refutes all this, they pretend Religion is Priest-craft, and the Scriptures to be not of divine Authority.

When they are gone thus far, they grow fond of their own Fancies, and stick at nothing: They strip God of his Attributes and his Providence; make him a Kind of *necessary and blind Cause of Things*, the Soul of the World, or some such Word, which they have learned from the Heathen Writers. They profess they have no Idea of God, and therefore God is nothing. These are the Methods by which Men advance to Atheism.

But on the other hand, it appears impossible for a Man who is inclined to live a sober and moral Life, to arrive at such a Pitch of Atheism; since Religion enjoins nothing but what will approve itself to a thinking Mind, as conducing both to his own, and the Happiness of others in this Life, and assuring us of an Immortality hereafter.

Now, what unprejudiced Person will refuse to take upon him the Profession of Religion, and accept of eternal Happiness? especially when it is for doing that only out of a true *Principle* of Religion which he is supposed to do out of a *Principle of Honour*. Is not a Desire of Happiness natural? What then can prejudice such a Man against the Belief of a fu

pure Reward? The great Truths therefore of Religion containing nothing absurd, and exhibiting infinite Advantages on such easy Conditions, must be the delightful Objects of a *good* Man's Faith.

And as 'tis hardly possible to conceive a Person can be an Atheist, without being at first *wicked*; so it appears as difficult to imagine, that if he be an Atheist, he should not continue to be *so*. 'Tis pretended that an Atheist may be a moral Man; which if we allow, yet it is plain enough that his principles lead him to prosecute *any* vicious Inclination that is agreeable to him; and what he can do with Safety. *Self-Love* will keep him from doing any Thing that would take away his Life, or make him keep in the good Graces of those, whose Disesteem of him would give him great Uneasiness: but it cannot be concluded from hence, that such a Person would not commit any Fact, be it ever so wicked, when it can be done securely, and is agreeable to his Humour. Indeed if he be not absolutely stupid, he will do any Thing, whether good or bad, that will give him as much Pleasure as he can have in this Life; and nothing can hinder him but *fear* of Punishment, which can have no Place in secret Actions. For as to the *Principle of Honour*, is nothing but a Cheat; the Atheist can have no principle but *Self-Love*, which will force him to commit any Thing for his Advantage. They deny any Actions to be *good* or *wicked* in themselves; and how far these Notions will carry them, 'tis very easy to imagine.

The Atheist practises Sincerity no longer than it serves for his Interest. 'Tis his Principle to profess or do any thing to save his Life, or to get any thing. If men may lie from so base a Principle as *Fear*, I doubt they may do so for *Interest*; and then what becomes of that *boasted Honour*, that will keep a Man from doing an *ill* Thing.

In reality 'twill amount to no more than this, that he will be *just*, when he *don't dare* be otherwise. This pretended *Principle of Honour* in an Atheist is a *changeable* Thing; an airy Name to amuse unthinking People, into a Belief that he hath some kind of Principles, that he will stick to, that so he may be *trusted* and conversed with.

And thus I think it clear, that Wickedness leads to *Atheism*, and *Atheism* to the Support of that.

I come next to consider,

II. That peculiar kind of Wickedness from whence Atheism proceeds, and that is, *Pride*.

This *Vice* is the Companion and the Cause of speculative Atheism. A proud Man hates to acknowledge himself in an Error, and therefore whatever he commits, he would have appear justifiable. But seeing the Scriptures are so plain against a wicked Life, and that there is no avoiding being condemned, while their Authority remains good, either by his own Conscience, or the Reason of Mankind; he finds it best to deny all Revelation, and so boldly shake off all Obligation to Piety.

And this must gratify an insolent Spirit to do Things out of the common Road, and to penetrate as they call it, into the deep Recesses of Nature, and to despise those who are enslaved by the Fear of a God. And as he despises those who are *wicked*, so he upbraids those *that are so* with Inconsistency, for doing the same *Things that he doth*, and thus he doubly gratifies his Pride, by justifying himself, and condemning others, when they have nothing to bear them out. Having blowed himself up with such lofty Conceits, he dotes more and more on his Notions; and finding by this Quiet the Practice of his Sins, he at last firmly believes what at first he only talked out of Opposition; and so becomes blind and stupid. To such any Hypothesis, that but clashes with Scripture, shall be demonstrated

onstration; and every profane Jest on a Clergyman shall be a sufficient Refutation of what he says against their Principles.

For tho' a proud Man is almost always mistaken, yet he fancies he is always right. He imagines he can master any thing without Study and Pains, and therefore without comparing the Ideas of Things in his Mind, proceeds to Judgment, and there he will stick, though his Resolution be never so absurd. And indeed as the ridiculous Paradoxes which Atheistical Writers maintain, shew their Ignorance, so the Pride with which they deliver them, shew the true Spirit of such Authors. *Plato* tells us, that the Atheists of his Age were proud and ignorant. And the modern Writers of this Kind don't pretend to more Modesty, who though they have little or nothing new, assume the Glory of delivering Men out of the Mazes of vulgar Errors.

And as the *Writings*, so the *Discourses* of these Gentlemen discover their Pride. For they do deliver themselves with such a scornful Air, when they endeavour to establish their own, or to overthrow their Adversaries Arguments, as sufficiently shews, that it is *through the Pride of his Countenance*, that the Wicked will not seek after God. I come now,

III. To consider the Charge, viz. *wilful Atheism*.
He will not seek after God.

Under this Head I shall enumerate all the Arguments which are of any Force against the Being of God, and then shew how weak they are.

But first I will obviate this Objection, that there is not now, nor ever was, a speculative Atheist.

To which I answer, that both Ancients and Moderns give us an Account of such Persons.

Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. Mathem.* p. 317. 316. *Genevæ.* 1621.) tells us, that *Diagoras Melius*, *Prodicus Cbius*, *Evemerus*, *Critias Atheniensis*, *Theophrastus*, and many others were Atheists. And *M.*

Bayle, (*See Pensées diverses à l'Occasion de la Comète*, Tom. II. c. clxxiv. p. 531.) adds to them some others of modern Date, and Mr. Blount says, that *Epicurus* was an Atheist, and *Vaninus* calls *Machiviel*, *Atheorum facile Princeps*.

2. It doth not at all follow, that a Man is not an Atheist, because he doth not openly profess himself so. For if they set up such a God as either cannot, or will not govern the World, and punish or reward Men, according to their Actions, this is in Reality to deny there is one; for 'tis a true Belief of *this* only, that can clear a Man from being an Atheist. For if he has not such a Belief of God, as implies a Knowledge of the Perfections of his Nature, he may pretend to the fashionable Name of Deist, but he is in Reality an Atheist.

And *Blount*, in his *Anima Mundi*, and *Vaninus*, in his *Amphitheatrum divinæ Provid.* p. 152. say, that to deny a Providence, is the same Thing as to deny a God.

This therefore being returned in Answer to the Objection, that there is no such Thing as an Atheist:

I come now to consider,

1. The Arguments of the Atheists against the Being of a God in general.

2. Such as are alledged against his Attributes and Perfections.

3. Such as are advanced against the Truth and Authority of revealed Religion.

1. I shall refute the Arguments that are brought against the Being of a God in general. And these are reducible to these two Heads; it is said,

1. That we can have no Idea of God.

2. That the Notion of a Deity owes its Original either to the Fears of some Men, or the crafty Designs of others.

1. I shall refute the Objections that are brought against

against the Existence of a Deity, from our not being able to have any Idea of him.

The Atheist alledges, that whatever is inconceivable, is really nothing at all. Which if we allow in a strict Sense of the Words, the Atheist cannot prove that that Being which we call God is *absolutely inconceivable*. We readily grant, that the immense Nature of God is *incomprehensible*; but we don't say, 'tis *absolutely inconceivable*. The common Notion of a God refutes this Part of the Objection, and 'tis a good Proof of the real Existence of a Deity.

2. 'Tis objected, that we can have no possible Notion of the Existence of any thing that is not the Object of our Senses. And if so, there can be no such Thing as comparing or distinguishing of Ideas in our Mind; but the simple Ideas of sensible Objects being compressed upon our Brain, must needs convey to us, by that Means, all the Knowledge that we can ever obtain about them, and that as soon too as ever the Objects are perceived.

But this is false; for 'tis plain, that by our bare Sensations of Objects, we know nothing of their Natures. Our Minds indeed by these Sensations are vigorously excited to enquire further about them. But this we could not do, if Sense were the *bighest Faculty* in our Nature, and we were devoid of a *reasoning Mind*.

And nothing can be more plain, than that we have Knowledge of the Existence of many things which can never be the Objects of our bodily Senses.

The *Epicurean* Atheist must needs grant the Existence of his *Atoms*, and his *empty Space*, which are not Objects of his Senses. Those that hold a *Soul* diffused through all Parts of Matter cannot deny, but this Power is invisible. Nay, those who assert a corporeal Deity, must own, that his Wisdom and

Power cannot fall under our bodily Senses. Let him that asserts, that what is not the Object of Sense, is nothing, let him, I say, tell me, if ever he saw that *Mind* by which he made such a Determination? That there is such a Power, is impossible for him to deny, for that very *Doubting* must convince him, that there is something in him of a *real Nature*, that can thus *think* and *doubt*.

Now let him call this *Soul* or *Mind* what he pleases; let it be a *Substance* distinct from *Matter*; be it a happy *Combination* of *Animal Spirits*, or the brisk *Agitation* of the *subtle* Parts of *Matter*, it certainly *exists*, and yet no Object of Sense. Now if he must grant too, that other Men have *Souls*, which fall not under the Cognizance of the Senses; it must be ridiculous to deny the Being of a God, because we cannot *see* him. For his Existence is as plainly demonstrable from his *visible* Works, as the Being of our *Minds* is from the Power of Thinking.

3. But thirdly, 'tis objected, *that we cannot have any Idea of God*, and consequently, there is none, because he is said to be *incomprehensible* and *infinite*; (that is, say they) something we can know nothing about. See *Hobbs Leviathan*, p. 51. *Sext. Emper. Adv. Mathem*, p. 17. *Leviat.* p. 11. 190. Part IV. c. 46. p. 374.

To which I answer, that as 'tis very foolish to deny the Existence of a God, because he is not the *Object* of our *Senses*; so, to conclude, that there is no such Being, because we cannot comprehend him, is equally absurd. For at this Rate we may deny the Existence of almost every thing; for there is something *incomprehensible* in the Nature of all Things.

But there is a vast Difference between *apprehending* and *comprehending* a Thing. We cannot, indeed, perfectly *comprehend* the Nature of God:

But

but to infer from hence, that we can have no *Idea* of him, is absurd. There are many Things of whose Existence it would be ridiculous to doubt, whose Qualities we are not able perfectly to comprehend. And among the rest, there is nothing but our own Existence, that we can be more assured of, than that there is a God.

For as to the Objects of Sense, we may have some Reason to doubt of their actual Existence without us, 'till we are satisfied, that our Senses do not deceive us. But when we are once assured, that there is a God, who is perfectly wise and good, we shall find, that it is not suitable to the *Idea* we have of him, that he should deceive us; and consequently we may well conclude, that he hath appointed our Senses to be proper Judges of their own Objects, and those Things that exist without us.

And if we will impartially consult our own Thoughts that we have *within* us, we may be demonstratively assured of the Existence of a God, perfect and infinite, as the Scriptures describe him to be.

Whoever *thinks*, must be *something*, and have a *real Being*; and if there is something actually existing, something must have always existed; for if there was a Time when there was *nothing*, there never could have been any Thing at all: Something therefore must have existed eternally. Now neither we nor the Things about us can be this eternal Being, for we soon die; and the Things of the World are liable to decay. We must therefore have Recourse to some *first Cause*: And that there must be some *Cause* that produced all Things, we must be assured of; for nothing can make itself. We perceive all Things here are continually changing. The *common Matter*, indeed, of all Bodies remains, and we do not find it perishable as their Forms are; but

but we know this cannot be the first Cause, because we have no Idea of its being an *active, wise, and powerful Being*, as that must be; but the Notion we have of it is, that it is *purely passive*.

If we consider farther of this eternal Being, we find also that it must continue *for ever for the Time to come*, since there is nothing either *within or without* it, that can possibly destroy it. Such a Being therefore must be necessarily self-existent without Beginning or End. Such a Being must also be Creator of all Things; because as nothing can make itself, they must either be eternal, which we are assured they are not, or else produced by this eternal Being; and as their *Beings* are derived from him, so must their *Perfections*.

Knowledge therefore, and all other excellent Faculties in the Creatures must come from the Creator; and if these Perfections are derived from him, he must be possessed of them in the greatest Degree. He must have *infinite Power, Omniscience, Wisdom, Justice, Mercy and Truth*. Now this is such a Description of God, as is plain to the meanest Capacity. As for the Word *Infinite*, of which Atheists affirm, it is *impossible to have any Conception*. When we say that God is *infinite* in Power, Wisdom, or Goodness, we mean by it, that he is *perfectly* so. Now where is the *Absurdity* of all this? Is it not as easy to conceive that a *Being* may have all possible Perfection in his Nature, as it is to have an Idea of one that is imperfect? How come we to know that a Thing is finite, and imperfect, unless we have also an Idea of Infinity or Perfection? Most certain therefore it is, that we have as true and clear an Idea of the Existence of a God, as of any Thing in Nature. See *Locke of Understanding* P. IV. Ch. x.

And therefore those who assert we have not any Idea of a God, discover such Ignorance and Obtuseness.

acy, as disgraces human Nature, and yet their Wickedness and Pride is such, that *they will not seek after God.*

4. 'Tis objected that the Notion of a Deity owes its Original to the foolish *Fears*, and *Ignorance* of some Men, and to the *Cunning* of others.

To which I answer,

1. That the Notion of a God could not come from *Fear*; for if it did, either this Fear must be *universally* in all Men, or else peculiar to *low spirited* Mortals. If the *former* be asserted, 'tis a strong Argument that there is a just Ground for such a Fear that can affect all Men; and if all Men are thus subject to this Fear; how came any particular Man to discover that the *Object* of this Fear is all a Cheat? If they assert that this Fear only possesseth *mean* spirits, and therefore *wise* Men finding its Advantage to Mankind, have ever since continued it, for the Public good; now to this I say, That if these cunning Men found there was an universal Dread of a God impressed upon the Minds of Men, this is a convincing Argument that such a Belief was true; and therefore these Men did not *invent*, but *find* this Notion in the Hearts of all Mankind.

But again: That the Notion of a God did not arise only from *Fear*, is plain from hence, that Mankind have gotten an Idea of him, that could never arise from *Fear*. If Fear only had made a God, it would represent him as the Author of nothing but Misery.

But instead of this, we believe him a kind and merciful Being; and therefore such a Notion must arise from some more noble Original. We find indeed in ourselves a just Fear to offend so kind a God, and believe he may justly punish those who slight his Mercy. But then we know that the Notion of a Deity is not derived from this *Fear*, but this *Fear* from it. The Atheist therefore must here take in

Hope

Hope too, as well as *Fear*, as a joint Cause of his pretended Origin of the Belief of a God; and say, that Mankind came to imagine that there was some powerful invisible Being, which they *hoped* would do them as much *good*, as they were afraid it would do them hurt. But these two contrary Ideas will destroy one another, and Mankind lay aside such an useless Idea of a God.

Again: That the Notion of a God does not arise from *Fear*, appears from this; that no one is so free from those melancholy and dreadful Thoughts, as he that truly believes in, and fears God, and will bear up himself bravely under the heaviest Afflictions.

Whereas he that hath no Belief of, nor any Knowledge of God, if he fall into Afflictions, hath not only no Power to bear the *present* Load of Misery, but expects worse to come; and notwithstanding his former Incredulity and Bravery, he now, as the Devil himself doth, *believes* and *trembles*. And therefore, tho' it be the chief Design of Atheism to give Men Exemption from *Fear*, yet it fails its Votaries in their greatest Extremities.

2. I'll shew that the Notion of a God was not invented by any crafty and politic Person.

1. Because was God really nothing, 'tis unconceivable how any one could ever attain such an Idea of God, as to render it intelligible to any one else; for which Way soever we come by our *Ideas*, we cannot have one of an absolute Non-entity; for what is absolutely nothing, can neither come into us by our *Senses*, nor be *innate* in our *Minds*.

If it be objected that the *ampliating* and *feigning* Power of the Mind feigns Things that did never exist, for Instance, a flying Horse, a Centaur, and why may it not as well feign the Notion of a Deity? To which I answer, that this Power of the Mind does not feign thus far; all that we can do, is to con-

connect two or more possible Ideas, by connecting the Ideas of Wings and a Horse, we may feign a *Pegasus*, and I can imagine this Creature to live 5000 Times as long, or to be 50000 Times bigger than is usual. But all this will give no Account at all of the Invention of the Idea of a God.

For suppose the *Mind* would endeavour to *amplify* the Idea of a Man, into that of a God, which is the Way, *Sextus Empiricus* says, Men did come by the Notion of a Deity. First he saith, the Mind can give him Eternity of Duration. But how came it by that Idea of Eternity? Was it previous to the Invention of a Deity? If it was, the Notion of God could not be then invented, for one of his chiefest Attributes was known before.

If it be said, that the Notion of Eternity was gained by *ampliating* the Idea of Time; and thus by imagining a Man to live a thousand Years, I might come to frame a Notion of a Being that should always exist. But this is a Mistake, for had I not in my Mind *before* a clear Idea of Eternity, I could no more by this *ampliating* Power gain a Notion of an eternal Being, than I could believe myself to be eternal; for all Things being perishable about me, would contradict that Notion.

And 'tis very strange, that I should come to believe any Being could have an eternal Duration, from considering of Things that are all perishable.

That which leads Men into this Mistake is this, we have all a Notion of a Being perfect or eternal, because there is such a Being in Reality. And therefore when we go about to consider the Duration of a Being, we can *ampliate* it so as to suppose it shall never cease to be. But this could not be done, if there were nothing eternal; if there be no God. And the Case is the same as to all the other *Perfections* of the divine Nature.

We have clear Ideas of them in our Minds, and therefore

therefore we can talk about them, and be understood, because there is something really existing that answers to those *Ideas*. But if there were no God, 'tis impossible there could be any such *Ideas*.

But however, this Assertion, that the Mind of Man was able to invent the Notion of a Deity, contradicts what the Atheist urges at other Times. For if, as he says, that we can *have no Idea of God*, 'tis strange a Man should invent what is impossible to invent or receive.

Again: If, as 'tis asserted, *all our Conceptions be passive*, and *all our Knowledge, Sense*, which Way could this cunning Inventor of a God come by his Notion of him? For according to the Atheist's Principles, the Mind could have no active Power, much less spontaneous; but all our Conceptions be mechanically occasioned by the Impression of external Objects. So that as *Protagoras* tells us, '*it is neither possible to conceive that which is not, nor indeed any thing else, but only just as our Mind suffers it by Impressions from without.*'

And therefore no Man could ever possibly invent any thing at all, much less grow so subtle as to invent a Deity.

2. As the Idea of a God cannot possibly be invented by any one, so neither could it be believed by Mankind, if it had been so.

For if there had been no previous Notions in the Minds of Men, of any of God's Perfections, what would it have signified to tell them, there was a God, when they could not know what was meant by the Word?

And therefore had this Notion of a God been a Cheat, it would not have continued long in the World; and much less that it should gain Ground, the more it was considered and understood. Besides it cannot be imagined, that any Man should think he could thus impose upon Mankind. He must think

think that some would be as sagacious to discover the Cheat, as he to contrive it. But

3. The Universality of the Belief of a God, is so a demonstrative Argument, that it could not arise from the Invention of any cunning Person: And 'tis Arrogance in the Atheist to set up his Judgment contrary to the Suffrage of all Mankind.

For supposing there are two or three Parts of the Earth, whose Inhabitants are so brutish as to have no Knowledge of God, which has been asserted, this is no more Argument against the Belief of God's being universally diffused throughout the World, than *Fools* are, that Men have generally no Reason.

Having proved that there is a God, and that his Notion of him did not arise either from *Fear* or Policy; I proceed to refute the Atheist's Objections against God's being a *Spirit*, or an *immaterial Being*.

1. The Sum of what they say against this Doctrine is, that an *incorporeal Substance* is a contradictory and inconsistent Name; 'tis all one as if a Man should say, an *incorporeal Body*; which Words, when joined together, do destroy one another; and therefore *Body and Substance* are all one. That a Spirit is nothing but a *thin, fluid, and transparent Body*; and that God himself is a most pure, simple, and corporeal spirit. (See *Leviathan*, p. 19. 371. 207. 11. 17. 207. 208. 214. *Spinozæ. Oper. Postuma.* p. 13. *Platon. Sophist.* p. 172. *Ficin. Arist. Metaph. lib.* c. 7. *Cudworth*, p. 20. *Sextus Empiricus. Adv. Math.* p. 267.)

These are the Sentiments of both the ancient and modern Atheists.

2. I shall now examine what Reasons they give to support their Assertion. All which may be reduced to this Argument, that an *immaterial Substance* is what no Man can possibly have any Conception of,

of, and consequently is Nonsense and Contradiction. See *Leviath. p. 373.*

But to this I answer, that it by no Means follows that there can be no incorporeal Substance, because *some few Men* pretend that they cannot conceive how any such Thing can be.

They imagine, I suppose, that they have a clear Idea of Body. But as Mr. *Locke* has observed, B. II. Chap. 23. if we carefully examine our Idea of Substance, we shall find we know as much of an incorporeal as a corporeal Substance. For Instance, let us take Gold, and inquire in our Mind what is the Substance, in which the Accidents of *Yellowness, great specific Weight* and *Ductility* do inhere, and we shall find we know not what it is. If we should say that the Subject of these Properties are the solid extended Parts, the inquisitive Mind will again ask what is the Subject of that *Extension*; we may say indeed, that 'tis the Substance itself; but what that Substance is, we have no clear Idea; yet from the Properties we find in this Body, we pronounce it to be Gold. So if we should take any incorporeal Substance, suppose the Soul of Man, and enquire what is the Support of that *self-moving Power*, that *reasoning Faculty*, and that *Liberty of Action* inherent in it, we know no more of it than of the Substance of Gold, and yet we know they must have something for their Support, as they are real Substances; and therefore 'tis as absurd to argue against the Existence of a Spirit, because we don't know its Substance, as it would be to argue there is no such Thing as Body, because we don't understand what the Substance of Body is. But

Another good Reason to prove that the Notion of an incorporeal Being was not *inconceivable* and *nonsensical*, is the joint Consent of all the ancient Writers in the Belief of it. *Vide Cicero, Lib. de naturis Deorum, & Tuscul. Quæst. lib. 1. Lactant. de ir-*

ei. c. 11. p. 742. Oxon. *Plutarch. de placitis Philo-
soph. lib. 1. c. 3. Plato. in Polit. p. 547. Ficini.*
Upon consulting these Authors, we may see that
they all speak of God as distinct from *Matter*. They
do thought *Matter* or *Body* to be a purely passive
thing, incapable of moving itself, but wholly de-
termined by some self-moving Mind, or by the
impulses of other Bodies without it. *Vid. de placitis
philos. lib. 1. c. 3.* Whereas, *God* they tell us is an
intelligent Mind pervading all Things, intangi-
ble, indivisible, invisible; but yet whose Es-
sence is plainly discoverable by our understanding
faculty.

3. I proceed now to speak to a third Argument,
to prove the Deity to be of a spiritual or immaterial
nature; and that there are incorporeal Substances:
and this I shall draw from the many and strange
absurdities of the contrary Opinion, *that there is
nothing but Matter in the World.* For,

1. Had there been nothing but Matter in the
World from Eternity, I cannot see how it can be
accounted how Motion began. Before Motion be-
gan, Matter could be nothing but a lifeless Lump;
and no one sure can be so stupid to call this a Deity,
and if so, the *divine Nature must be something distinct
from Matter.*

But to account how Motion came into Matter,
must be by one of these three Ways.

1. That Motion came into Matter from some-
thing distinct from it. Or,
2. That Motion is essential to Matter, and coeter-
nal with it. Or,
3. That it came into it by Chance.

The first of these, I doubt, they will not say,
because it is Truth.

And one would think no Man can be so senseless
to maintain the last, for Chance really signifies
nothing; and those who will be so absurd as to as-
sert

fert it, deserve to be treated as we do Fools and Madmen, with silent Pity and Compassion.

The second Point, therefore, I suppose, viz. That *Motion is essential to and coeternal with Matter*, is that which our Corporealists will adhere to; and that either all Matter and Motion taken together, or else some fine and subtile Parts of it are the Deity; but this I will prove to be absurd. For,

1, 'Tis plain, that *Motion is not essentially included in the Idea of Matter*; because I can conceive it as well when it is at *Rest*, as when in *Motion*; much less to be forced to own that it must be always in *Motion*; whereas was *Motion essential to Matter*, would be impossible to conceive it at *Rest*. But supposing that *Motion be essential to Matter*, it must be then so to every Particle; and that in the same Proportion: And if so, then every Atom of Matter must always retain its original Degree of Motion and can never be deprived of it. But on the contrary, we find the same Body may be brought to move sometimes faster, sometimes slower, and sometimes be reduced to *Rest*; and therefore Motion is not essential to Matter.

And thus we see, that without supposing some Principle of Motion distinct from Matter, Motion could never have come into it.

But allowing them that Motion should get into Matter, they don't know how. If there be nothing else but Matter and Motion, how will they account for the Deity? They dare not say that Matter without Motion can be God; and bare Motion can certainly never make a Deity. For if Motion came into Matter any Time after its Existence, the Deity then must receive a Being, and so the first Cause must be caused himself, which is a Contradiction.

If they say, that Motion is coeternal with, and essential to Matter, and the Deity be Matter thus eternally moved; then either every Particle must be essentially

essentially God ; and then there will be as many Gods as there are Atoms ; or else he must be the Result of the whole, or of some *Parts* of Matter combined together. But without doubt they will say, that 'tis not any one Particle of Matter that is God alone, but 'tis all of them, or at least a good Number of these combined together, out of which a God is composed. But if there be not a *divine Nature* in each single Atom, the bare Combination of all or some of them will never make a Deity.

But to go on ; allowing the Particles of Matter be great, or small ; to move *swiftly*, or *slowly* ; be combined together, or disjoined, as they think ; how can this produce *Wisdom* and *Understanding*, the highest Perfections of the divine Nature ; and in which we place the Essence of the Deity ? As there ever any one believed a Particle of Matter was any wiser for being moved than it was before when it lay still ? Or think that the Knowledge of such a rambling Atom encreased in Proportion to the Velocity of its Motion ? There is no other Idea ariseth from hence, but that it changes its Place : But what is this to Thought and Consciousness ?

But again : As we cannot possibly conceive that the Motion of one Particle of Matter alone, can give Understanding ; so neither can we suppose, that any Body composed of many of them can acquire any such Understanding, barely on the Account of the Motion of its Parts, for Motion only will do no more to the whole, than it did to each one singly. Nor can any happy Combination or Constitution of Parts avail any Thing, in this Case, any more than Motion ; nor can that be effectual to superinduce *Wisdom* and *Understanding* into Matter. The *σῶμα λεπίομερες* be no more a God, than *Jupiter's Log* was among the *Frogs* ; nor than the most gross Body in nature.

These Absurdities some of the Corporealists perceiving, have had recourse to another Way of maintaining their beloved Assertion, *that there is no other Substance but Body*. They assert, *that Cogitation is essential to Matter, or all Substance is essentially cogitative and extended*. The monstrous Absurdities of which, I shall now consider.

And first: 'Tis plain, that if *Cogitation* be as *essential* to Matter as *Extension*; then every Particle must needs be a *thinking Substance*, or *Body* by itself *distinct* from all other Particles; as every Particle extended and distinct from all others. Now if each such Particle of Matter *Cogitation* be added, then every Atom will be a *thinking Being* and equal to any of the rest in Respect of this *cogitative Power*. And if this be so, then there must either be no God, or else every Particle of Matter must be a distinct God by itself. For if there be any such Thing as *perfect Knowledge, Power, Wisdom* and *Goodness*, every one of these Particles must have it.

For 'tis impossible *infinite* or perfect Power, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Goodness, can be produced out of *finite*; and therefore it plainly follows, that either there is no Deity at all, or else every Particle of Matter must be a God by itself, according to this Hypothesis. For *finite* or imperfect *Cogitation* can no more be the Cause of infinite, than *Cogitation* can arise from incogitative Matter.

The Operations and Actions also of a corporeal Deity must be all absolutely *necessary*. For he will be really only the bare Result of Motion in Matter as 'tis variously formed, and disposed so as to produce any natural Effect.

Having refuted the Atheist's Objections against the immaterial Nature of God; I shall next answer those Objections that Atheistical Men have brought against the Attributes of God in general.

Some are pleased to say, that nothing at all can be known of God, but only, that he is; for his Nature is incomprehensible: That we do but dishonour God, by pretending to understand, and to talk about his Attributes; about which we can say nothing, but only what serves to express our Astonishment and Ignorance. And therefore the civil Magistrate ought to determine what Attributes shall be given to the Deity. This seems to be the Sense of *Vaninus*, and is plainly of *Mr. Hobbs*, and was before them of *Sextus Empiricus*. See *Amphitheat. Div. Prop.* p. 9. *Human Nature*, p. 69. *Leviath.* 374. 191. 192. *Sext. Empir. Adv. Mathem.* p. 17.

But so far is it from being true, that we cannot reason of the Nature of God from his Attributes, nor discourse of those Attributes from our Reason: That this seems to be the only proper Way of enquiring into the divine Perfections. For though the Deity both abound with infinite Perfections, yet by the Light of Nature we can discover those only, of which he has given us some Impression on our Natures, and these are the Scales by which our Reason must weigh the divine Perfections. For in order to gain a true Notion of these, we ought to take our Life from those Perfections, which we find in the Creatures, especially ourselves.

We can know nothing, but by two Ways; by its Cause, or by its Effects. We cannot make use of the former in Reference to the Deity, because he being himself without Cause, cannot be known to us this Way. By the second Way, he may properly be the Object of our Knowledge. For whatever Perfection we can discover in the Works of the Creation, the same we must suppose to be in him to the highest Degree.

And if we consider the Perfections that are to be found in the Works of God in this World, they may

may be reduced to these four general Heads: *Being, Life, Sensibility, and Reason*. And these will lead us into a good Way of discovering the Perfections of the divine Nature.

1. If we consider *Being*, and the Perfections of it; they must be in the first Cause in the greatest Perfection. Now the highest Perfections belonging unto *Being*, are these two, 1. That it shall always be. And 2. That it be great.

And if we attribute these two Perfections to God, thence will arise his *Eternity* and his *Omnipresence*, for what cannot *cease to be*, must be *eternal*; and what cannot be *circumscribed*, must be *boundless*. And though a Man has not an adequate Idea of *Eternity*, yet when he considers, that the first Cause of Things could not be caused by any Thing else; he must be eternal. So as to *Omnipresence*; though he cannot tell the Manner how a Spirit is present to every Part of Matter, yet will conclude, that the Deity must some how be present with all Things, since 'tis impossible he should be excluded any where, as 'tis also that he should act where he is not.

Nor would, I believe, any unprejudiced Mind have Recourse either to the Notion of God's being *universal Matter*; or infinite Space, to solve his *Omnipresence*. For the *former* makes the Deity divisible, which is absurd. And the *latter* renders God nothing at all, but *imaginary Space*; which how it should, any more than the former, account for the energetical Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of the divine Nature, would be as impossible for him to conceive, as it is for the Assertors of it to prove.

2. If we consider *Life*, we must needs conclude that it is in the Deity in the greatest Perfection. Can we imagine that a Being from whom all Life, and Power is derived, can be without it himself? And that he who hath all the Power of Nature at his

Command,

Command, can be unable to perform what is possible to be done? and if so, must he not be *Omnipotent*? And from hence also his Eternity might be naturally produced. For we cannot conceive this *Life*, this almighty Power, that is in God, can ever cease, and consequently God must *live for ever*.

3. When we consider *Sensibility* in ourselves, this also must be in the divine Nature in the highest Degree, as we received what we have from him. I take this in general, for that Power whereby any being is capable of *Pleasure* or *Pain*. And such a sensibility, or something analogous to it, we cannot but think God must have in the most exquisite Perfection. And tho' we ought to think that the infinite Perfection of God secures him from feeling *Pain*, yet we have no Reason to suppose him insensible of *Pleasure*; for he contains in himself all possible good, of which he is most exquisitely sensible, and consequently must be eternally delighted in the Enjoyment of his own infinite Fulness.

4. But the highest Perfection in ourselves or any other Creatures, is *Reason* which we ought to attribute to God in the highest Degree.

Now the Perfection of Reason consists in these two Things.

1. In *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* in the Understanding Faculty.

2. In *Rectitude* or *Righteousness* in the Will, all which we cannot but suppose the divine Nature to be perfectly endowed with. And first as to *Knowledge* and *Wisdom*.

The former of which implies an Understanding of Things, as they are in themselves, according to their true Natures and Properties.

The latter, a considering of them as to their Relations and Dependences upon one another, or according as they are qualified to be *Ends* and *Means*.

And these must certainly be in God, for the same

Reason that we have found in him the other Perfections abovementioned.

To the Deity therefore we ought to ascribe *Omniscience*, or infinite, or *most perfect Wisdom*; for no doubt we ought to conclude, that the Deity both *knows every Thing according to its Nature*, and also *understands its Usefulness and Subserviency to any End, Design, or Purpose* whatsoever.

Again: We must also ascribe to God *Rectitude of Will*, or *perfect Righteousness*. And since *Rectitude of the Will* consists in an exact Conformity of it, and all its Affections to the impartial Rule of right Reason, we cannot but suppose also, that the Will of God is in a most exquisite Conformity to the Dictates of his unerring Reason, and that the Deity doth in every Respect act exactly agreeable thereunto. And by this Means we find that God must be just and righteous in all his Proceedings.

Hobbs indeed asserts that there is *no Distinction between Good and Evil, but only with Relation to the Person that useth them; who calls that Good which he loves, and that Evil which he hates.* (*Leviath. p. 263, 64.*) That God doth every Thing by his irresistible Power, and that in that is founded our Obedience to him, and not in any Principle of Gratitude to him for Benefits received. (*Spinozæ op. post. p. 37.*) That Justice is founded in Power, and that whatever is enacted by any sovereign Power can't be unjust. (*Leviath. p. 187.*) Which impious Notions I shall refute by and by; and therefore I shall here only observe, that this Way of depriving the Deity of the lovely Attributes of Justice and Goodness, and making him act according to the Dictates of irresistible Power, gives us the Notion of a Tyrant, instead of a righteous Governor of the World, and is contrary to the sober and considerate Sentiments of Mankind, in whose Minds a plain Distinction between Good and Evil is founded, and cannot with-

but Violence be brought to think that God is not guided by Truth and Justice. They see the Loveliness of these among Men, and therefore cannot suppose an infinite almighty Being can act otherwise; they are sensible that Deviations from those Rules proceed only from the Imperfections that are in our Natures; but that God who possesseth all Things, cannot make Use of any indirect Means to procure himself Happiness, or to stave off Misery, since the Perfection of his Nature gives him *one*, and secures him from all the *other*.

And thus we see, how by considering the Perfections which we find in ourselves, and attributing them in the highest Proportion to God, from whence they must all be derived, we may attain to a good Knowledge of the Properties and Attributes of the divine Nature.

I come now to remove two great Bars to the Knowledge of God and his Attributes, which are,

1. That there is in reality no such Thing as moral Good or Evil.

2. That all Things are determined by absolute Fatality.

1. That there is no such Thing as moral Good or Evil.

This Position is maintained by atheistical Men, *Vide Anima Mundi, in or of Reason, p. 117. Oracles of Reason, p. 89. Spinoza. Op. posthum. p. 164. Hobbs's Leviath. p. 24. 63. 73. 79.*

Which I shall endeavour to refute; and in order to do this the more clearly, it will be necessary first to state the Point, which our Adversaries have designedly perplexed, They say, whatever, a Man desires and is advantagious to him, that he calls *Good*; and whatever is hurtful or hateful to him, he calls *Evil*; and so doubtless it is to him.

Now, say they, since that which may be *good* or *desired* by one Man, may be *evil* to another; nay hated

hated by the *same* Person at *another Time*, it plainly follows, that the *Nature* of *Good* and *Evil* is precarious; every one accounting that *Good* which he likes, and that *Evil* which he disapproves of.

To all which I say, that these Men run their Argument too far. For allowing *that all Men desire Good*, allowing that a *seeming Good* hath the same Effect as *real Good*, while Men desire it; nay allowing that this *seeming Good* depends upon various Inclinations of Men, it does not prove against the natural Difference between *Good* and *Evil*, and the eternal Obligation of Morality. For the Point in Dispute, is not whether such an essential Difference as this now spoken of, be discernable in all the Actions of Men, but whether there be not *some* such Actions as discover themselves to be good in their own Natures, antecedent to the Obligation of any human Laws. And whether we have not all the Reason to believe that those Actions, which the Mind thus discovers to be essentially good, are agreeable to the Will of God, and directed by it; and that God also proceeds in all Respects, according to the same universal and eternal Dictates of Reason; and is just, and good, and righteous in all his Dealings with his Creatures.

This is what we assert, and what our Adversaries deny; and what I shall now endeavour to prove.

In order to which, it must be allowed in the

1. Place, That Man is a thinking Being, and hath the Power of Reasoning and Inference; and that we know this, and discover such a Power in ourselves. And since all intelligent Creatures must desire and endeavour to attain that Kind of Happiness which is agreeable to their Natures, so must we. Now the Happiness of any Being consisting in the free and vigorous Exercise of its Faculties, or in the Perfection of its Nature; and the Nature of Man being Reason, the Happiness of Mankind

Mankind must chiefly consist in the free Exercise of his reasoning Faculty ; or being in such a Condition, as that we can do all Things that are agreeable to, and avoid all Things as are disagreeable to it. This being granted, it will plainly follow, that all such Actions as do universally approve themselves to the Reason of Mankind, and do constantly tend towards, and promote the Happiness of Man, considered as to his whole Nature, and chiefly in his rational Part, must be said to be in their own Nature *Good*, and their Contraries must be denominated *Evil*. For whatsoever is universally approved, is universally *good* ; to call a Thing *good*, being nothing else but to declare its Conducibility to that End it was designed for. And that this is the Case in Reference to that which is commonly called *moral Good and Evil*, will appear plain and evident, when we shew,

2. That there are some Things and Actions which the free and unprejudiced Reason of all Mankind cannot but acknowledge to be *comely, lovely and good* in their own Natures, as soon as ever it considers them.

Such are, paying some *Kind of Worship to God, Obedience to Parents, Gratitude for Benefits received, Acts of Justice, Mercy, Kindness, and Good-Nature.*

And if so, it plainly follows, that those Things that do thus demonstratively approve themselves to the unprejudiced Reason of all Men, must be *good and lovely* in their own Natures, or morally so, antecedent to the Obligation of human Laws and Customs.

And in this plain Distinction between *Good and Evil*, which unprejudiced Reason impowers us to make, is founded, that which we call *Conscience*, which is a kind of an internal Sensation of *moral Good and Evil*, and is as natural to a rational Mind as the Sense of Pain and Pleasure is to the Body.

For

For as that is given us to preserve us from bodily Evils, and to capacitate us to enjoy such a Kind of Happiness; so Conscience is our Guard against Spiritual *Evils*; and will give us, if rightly followed, so much Peace and Satisfaction of Soul, as cannot be had any other Way.

But again: 'Tis plain, that *some Things*, viz. Virtue, Morality, Piety, &c. do naturally tend to the *Happiness* of Mankind; and *others*, viz. Vice, Immorality, Impiety, &c. to their Misery. And consequently we must esteem the *former* to be really *good*; and the *latter*, *evil*; antecedent to their being enacted by human Laws.

Indeed some Things may be enacted or prohibited by human Laws, that have no *real* Goodness or Evil in them. And thus God was pleased to appoint the *Jews* many Rites of this Nature that were necessary for their present Circumstances. But then whenever there was a Competition between them, they were postponed to moral Virtues, which were of eternal Obligation. Therefore they are said *not to be good*, i. e. in themselves, but only by Institution. But this is not the Case of such Actions as we have mentioned, which are called morally *good* or *evil*; for these have been constantly distinguished by human Laws, and have never been confounded or changed.

3. But again: Those Horrors and ungrateful Sensations, which seize upon us when we see or hear of any Act of Cruelty; and that Indignation that arises in us against any ungrateful Person, when we are told of him; and on the contrary, that Satisfaction of Soul that arises in us when we see or hear of any Instance of great Kindness and Compassion, and a convincing Argument, that there is an essential Difference between *Good* and *Evil*, and that we have a plain Knowledge of such a Distinction.

And now upon the whole, there being thus plain

ly proved an essential and natural Difference between *moral Good* and *Evil*; that Men agree in this Point; that *Morality* conduces to our Happiness, and Immorality to our Misery; we may justly conclude, that all other rational Agents must judge of *Good* and *Evil* after the same Manner: And they must also know, that their Perfection and Happiness consists in acting according to the eternal Rules of right Reason, and moral Virtue. Otherwise several rational Natures all derived from the same Deity may come to make contradictory Judgments, even when they act according to the great and common Rule of their Nature: And if so, the Principle of right Reason would be precarious, and Men would never be assured that they were in the right in any Point. Therefore this great Rule of Reason must be uniform, and the same in all Beings that are endowed with it, when it is rightly used.

And from hence we must conclude, that the same eternal Law of right Reason, which God has given to be a Guide to all rational Beings, must also be in him in the greatest Perfection; and that not only all the Perfections in the Creatures must be in the first Cause; but if it were not so, God must be supposed to have given us a Rule of Action, that is contrary to his own Nature, or different from it; and that he has contrived our Powers so, as to deceive us in the most essential Points.

For if when, as I have shewn, God hath not only fixed in our Natures a Desire of Happiness, but also disposed them so, that every Power of them convinces us, that the Exercise of moral Virtue is the only Way to make us happy. If, I say, after this there should be no such Things as *moral Virtue* and *Goodness*, 'tis plain, *Reason* is given to no manner of Purpose, but to misguide us. But this not being to be supposed of the Deity, who contains

tains in himself all possible Perfections: Our Reason must direct us to conclude the Deity also guided in all his Proceedings by the eternal Rules of right Reason and Truth, and consequently he will do always what is just, kind, and righteous.

Of this the ancient Heathens were so sensible, that they always connected *Goodness* with the Idea of God; and several of the old Atheists argued against the Existence of a Deity, from a Supposition that the *World was so ill made and ordered as it is*.

Now there would have been no Force in the Argument, if they had not had a clear Notion, that *Goodness, Justice, and Righteousness*, are naturally included in the Idea of a God.

And as this is so, we shall gain one more good Argument for this eternal Distinction between Good and Evil, and a yet much nobler Foundation for Morality. For we cannot but think that a God, who has created several Orders of Beings for their Happiness, and his Glory, by his just, kind, and gracious Dealing with them, will give to those Creatures, whom he has made rational and free, such a Method of knowing his Will, as that they shall never be mistaken about it, but by their own Fault. And also that he will make the Difference between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, so conspicuous, that no one can miss of the Knowledge of his Duty, but from their own Neglect. And all this we see God hath actually done, and indeed much more; having over and above connected very great Rewards with the Practice of Virtue and Morality; and hath either implanted in the Minds of Men a Notion of some future State, or else hath given our Nature such a Power, as that we may attain to such a Notion; for we find a very plain Belief of such a State among many of the Heathens.

And above all this, he has given us a clear Revelation of his Will, whereby we may gain a yet plainer

plainer Knowledge of our Duty, be more perfectly instructed in the Method of eternal Salvation, and find greater Helps than we had in the State of Nature. And all this is given us to inforce the Practice of moral Virtue, and enable us to perform more effectually those Things, which the universal Reason of Mankind approves as *good, lovely, and advantageous* to human Nature.

Having refuted this Objection of the Atheists; that there is no such Thing as moral Good or Evil,

I proceed to consider their other, *viz. That all Things are determined by absolute Fatality, and that God himself and all Creatures whatsoever are necessary Agents, without any Power of Choice, or real Liberty in their Natures at all.*

And here I will shew the Groundlessness of those Arguments on which these Men build their Hypothesis of *absolute Necessity*.

Mr. Hobbs saith: *In all Deliberations 'tis the last only we call the Will; this is immediately before the doing of any Action, or next before the doing of it become impossible.* Also, *nothing, saith he, can take Beginning from itself, but must do it from the Action of some other immediate Agent without it; if therefore a Man hath a Will to something, which he had not before, the Cause of his willing is not the Will itself, but something else not in his own disposing. So that whereas 'tis out of Controversy, that of voluntary Actions the Will is the necessary Cause; and by this which is now said, the Will is also caused by other Things, whereof it disposeth not, it follows, that voluntary Actions have all of them necessary Causes, and therefore are necessitated.* Again also: *Every sufficient Cause, saith he, is a necessary one, for if it did not produce its Effects necessarily, 'twas because something was wanting to its Production, and then it was not sufficient.* Now from hence it follows, *that whatsoever is produced, is produced necessarily, and consequently*

all voluntary Actions are necessitated. And to define a free Agent to be that, which when all Things are present which are necessary to produce the Effect, can nevertheless not produce it, is Nonsense; for 'tis all one to say, the Cause may be sufficient, i. e. necessary, and yet the Effect shall not follow. This is the Substance of all Mr. Hobbs his Proof against Free-will, which is full of Mistakes.

For in the first Place, he confounds the *Power of Willing* in Man with the *last Act of Willing*; or Determination after deliberating. For an Agent may be free to deliberate on, and to compare the Objects offered to his Choice, and yet not be so after he hath chosen. Then 'tis impossible to chuse, and not to chuse; and after this Election is made, none ever supposed that a Man is not free to make it. And therefore if by the *Will*, Mr. Hobbs means, that *last Act of Willing*, which immediately precedes *Acting*, he opposes that which no Man ever denied. For no Man ever supposed *Freedom* and *Determination* to be the same Thing; but only that a Man before he determined was *free* to determine, or not.

Again, 2. 'Tis hard to know what he means here by *Nothing taking its Beginning from itself*. He is talking about *voluntary Actions*, and about the Freedom of human Nature, and therefore should refer this to the Will of Man. But if this be spoken of the *Will*, what will it signify?

I grant nothing can take its Beginning from itself; the *Will* of Man took its Beginning from God; and voluntary Actions, we say, take their Beginning from the *Power of Willing* placed in the Soul. But it will not from hence follow, that those Actions we call *voluntary* are *necessitated*, because they take their Original from that free Power of Election God hath placed in our Natures, and not from themselves. I dare say, no one sees the Consequence of this Part of the Argument. And it will

will not in the least follow from hence, *that the Cause of a Man's Willing is not the Will itself; but something else not in his own disposing*; it is the Power of *Willing* in us, which is generally called the *Will*, which is said to be *free*; tho' as Mr. *Locke* says, it ought rather to be said the *Man is free*. For besides that, it is not usual to predicate one Faculty of another, 'tis hardly good Sense to say the *Will is free* in the Manner now explained, for that would be the same Thing as to say that a *Power is free*, whereas it is not the *Power*, but the *Man* that hath the *Power* that is *free*. Now from hence it will not follow, that a Man is free whether he will *Will* or not, because he must *Will* some Way; but it will follow, that when a Man hath made any particular *Volition*, he is no longer at Liberty as to this particular Case; for the Determination is then actually made, and the Man no longer free not to make it. But this proves nothing against the Liberty of the Mind of the Man.

Again: What doth Mr. *Hobbs* mean by the *Will's being the necessary Cause of voluntary Actions*? Doth he mean that the Will of Man must of Necessity *act freely*, if he does, we are agreed; but if he means that the *Will* is previously necessitated in every Act of Volition to *Will* just as it doth; this is begging the Question, which indeed, when a Man contradicts the common Sense of Mankind without Proof, is the best Way of proceeding.

But that which looks most like an Argument for the Necessity of all human Actions, is this which he brings in the last Place. *That Cause, saith he, is a sufficient Cause which wanteth nothing requisite to produce its Effect; but such a Cause must also be a necessary one; for had it not necessarily produced its Effect, it must have been because something was wanting in it for that Purpose, and then it could not have been sufficient: So that whatever is produced, is produced*

duced necessarily; for it could not have been at all without a sufficient Cause, and therefore also all voluntary Actions are necessitated.

Now all this proves *nothing* to his Purpose; he still confounds the *Act of Willing* with the *Power of Willing*. For, not now to dispute what he saith of every sufficient Cause's being a necessary one, allowing that when any Determination is made, or whenever any voluntary Action is done, that the Will of Man was a sufficient Cause to produce that Effect, he can infer no more than this. That when the Will hath determined, 'tis no longer free to will, or not at that particular Instant. But this will not prove, that the Will was necessitated to make that Determination *a priori*, and no other, which is yet what he means. For the same Power of Liberty, which enabled it to make that Determination, would have enabled it to make another contrary to it, and then when that had been made, it would have been as necessary as the former; and therefore that Definition of a *free Agent's* being that, which when all Things are present, which are needful to produce the Effect, can nevertheless not produce it, doth not when rightly understood, imply any Contradiction, or is Nonsense. For the meaning of it is, That he is properly free, who hath the Power of Determination in himself, and when all Requisites are ready, can yet chuse whether he will act or not.

Mr. Hobbs defines a *free Agent* to be, him that can do if he will, and forbear if he will, and that Liberty is the absence of all external Impediments, which is a Contradiction to what he advances about Necessity. For how can a Man be said to act necessarily, that hath no external Impediments to hinder him, or Causes to impel him, but is free to act if he will or to forbear.

Thus we see that this great Patron of Necessity hath very little to say for his darling Notion, and that he plainly contradicts himself. Spinoza

Spinoza also asserted, that the Deity had neither Understanding nor Free Will ; and declares that all Things flow from the Deity by an *absolute Necessity*.

And then as to the *Mind of Man*, he gives this Reason why it cannot have any *free Will*, *Quia Mens ad hoc, vel illud volendum determinatur a Causa, quæ etiam ab aliâ, & hæc iterum ab aliâ & sic in infinitum.*

As to the Refutation of which, I have already removed the Foundation on which it is built, by proving that these are immaterial Substances, and that God himself is one. For all the Necessity *Spinoza* contends for, depends, as I have shewed, on *his Notion* of the Deity. If therefore it be true, that God is an Immaterial Substance, a Being distinct from *Nature*, or the *Universe*, and the Creator of all Things, as I have proved, *Spinoza's* Arguments for Necessity are broken to Pieces. For the Reason he assigns for the necessary Operations of the Deity, are not the Perfections of his Nature determining to good, and just, lovely, and reasonable Things ; but that the Deity being *universal Nature*, all Things and Operations are *Parts of him*, and their several Ways and Manners of acting and existing, according to the necessary Laws of Motion and Mechanism, are *his Understanding and Will*, which ignorant People, he saith, may perhaps take in a literal Sense, and think that God can properly *know* or *Will* any Thing ; but that in Reality there is no such Thing as Understanding or Free Will in God, since all Things flow from him by inevitable Necessity ; and if the Deity be not free, that is, if the whole be not free, there can be none in Men which are but *Parts of him*.

If this be true, that there is no other God but *Nature*, all Things must be governed by an *absolute Fatality*. But if there be, as I have shewed,

a Deity, who is an *infinitely perfect Being*, distinct from *Nature* or the *Universe*, the Creator of all Things, then none of those Consequences will follow, but it will appear very reasonable to believe that God hath still a Care and Providence over that World which he at first made; and that he delights in exercising Kindness, Judgment, and Righteousness; that he has made Creatures capable of *knowing* and *understanding* this, and who consequently have a *free Power*, as in other Things, so of giving Praise and Glory to him, nay and of glorifying themselves in being capacitated to attain so excellent a Knowledge.

And that Man hath such a *Power or Freedom of Will*, is what I shall in the last place prove.

1. This is plain from *Experience*. We find we have a Power in abundance of Cases to prefer one Thought to another. We can in our Minds compare and revolve over the several Objects of our Choice; and we can chuse whether we will do this, or not.

2. If all Things and Actions whatever are absolutely necessary, there can be no such Thing as *Good*, or *Evil*, *Right*, or *Wrong*, *Honourable*, or *Base*; and why should we trouble ourselves about paying any Veneration to the Deity, if he could not help making us just what we are? God hath, according to these horrid Principles, no natural Right to any Obedience from us, as a free Agent would, who had bestowed so many Benefits upon us.

And so likewise, as to human Laws and the Good of the Government where we are placed, no Man according to these abominable Principles, is under any Obligation to be just and merciful. If he can but escape Punishment, he may murder, and do the most shocking Crimes, without being disturbed in his own Mind, because he is *necessitated* to do what he doth.

Indeed *Spinoza* saith, that the Government may, if they think fit, put such a Man to Death, but not *because he is guilty, and deserves it*, but because he is *dangerous* to them, and therefore to be *feared*. By which he plainly allows, that all Wickedness is *excusable*, though it be not always *tolerable*, as it is not when it becomes *formidable*. *Fear*, according to these Men, makes the Subject obey the Laws, not because he thinks himself bound to do it in Conscience, or because it is just, but because he is *afraid* of Punishment. And the Magistrate punishes an Offender, not because he has committed a Fault, but because they are afraid of him. And thus the most wicked Man is as innocent as a Saint from any Guilt of Sin he hath upon him; for he is necessitated to do what he doth. And therefore he may and ought to have as much Peace of Mind, and as much Respect paid him from others too, provided they are not afraid of him, as ever any Man had. And as this is a most *pernicious*, so it is the most *impudent* and *daring* Opinion that ever was advanced; for besides that, it gives the Lie to the Experience and certain Knowledge of every body; it renders all Laws, and Rules of Action, and all the Sanctions of them, ridiculous; it makes all *Advice* useless; all *Censure*, *Punishment* and *Reproof* is *unjust*; all *Honours* and *Rewards* it renders *unmerited*; and all *Knowledge*, *Wisdom*, *Care*, and *Circumspection*, become the most unaccountable Things in the World: For if all Things are governed by absolute Fatality, any one may see, that all these Things signify nothing at all: But 'tis plain, that the wisest Part of the World, as they have been esteemed, are in Reality the greatest Fools that can be; for they encourage Men to act well, and discourage them from doing amiss, by elaborate and studied Methods, when they are necessitated to do what they do.

Nor can I see how these wonderful *Discoverers* can be acquitted from being as great *Fools* as the rest of Mankind; for why do they write Books to convince Men, when they are necessitated to be of the Opinion that they hold. They will say, no doubt, they are necessitated to write. But if the Government should plead, that they are necessitated to punish them for so doing, they would make a large Outcry against Persecution. For these Gentlemen make use of Liberty and Necessity, as it best serves their Purposes. When they commit Immoralities, then they ought not to be punished, because they are *necessitated to do it*. But if the Government, judging such Notions destructive to the Good of Society, and contrary to the Word of God, thinks fit to prohibit the Propagation of them, and punish the Authors, How do these Men then cry up the Liberty of human Nature? Then every Man's Conscience is to be his Guide, and the like.

Thus we see they would do what they please, and no one should call them to an Account; they would act like *Fools*, and yet be thought *wise Men*. In a Word, they would say, *we are they that ought to speak, who is Lord over us?* This is what they aim at in all their Arguments and Objections against Religion, and particularly in the Bustle they make about the *absolute Necessity of all Events and Actions*; which how weakly they maintain, I think I have sufficiently shewn.

Bishop *BRADFORD*'s

BOYLE's LECTURES

ON THE

CREDIBILITY

OF THE

Christian Religion,

A BRIDG'D.

THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

Bishop **BRADFORD's**

BOYLE's LECTURES

ON THE

Credibility of the **CHRISTIAN RELIGION.**

The Qualifications requisite towards the
Receiving a divine Revelation.

JOHN vi. 45.

*It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all
taught of God. Every Man therefore, that hath
heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh un-
to me.*

BY these Words we are informed by our Sa-
viour what Sort of Persons those are, who
are qualified for receiving him and his Doc-
trine.

In treating upon which, it will be proper to con-
sider these *three* Particulars.

I. In what Way and Manner *God* may be said to
teach Men, in order to their receiving any new Re-
velation from him.

II. Who they are that may be said to *have heard*
and *learned of the Father*, in order to the same End.

III. What Qualifications are requisite both to
the *Hearing and Learning of the Father*, and coming
to the Son.

I. Let us consider in what Way *God* may be said

298 *The Qualifications requisite towards*

to teach Men. Our Saviour in applying this Prophecy of *Isaiah* to that more plain and plentiful Instruction, which was to be communicated to Men in the Days of the *Messiah*, seems also to take in all that previous *Teaching of God*, whereby he had prepared Men for the receiving him, when he should come; it may therefore be reasonable upon this Occasion to consider these *four* several Ways, in which Men might be said to be *taught of God*.

1. Men may be said to have been *taught of God* in order to this End by the Works of Creation and Providence.

From that vast Number of Beings which have been formed by God, together with the constant Care he taketh of all that he hath formed, there are plain Indications and Instructions given by the Deity, to those Creatures, whom he hath made capable of contemplating his Works: [See *Psal.* xix. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Rom.* i. 19, 20.]

2. God hath *taught* Men also by the Suggestion and Dictates of their own Minds.

Nor will this be denied by any, who own a God and a Providence, *viz.* that there is in Man a Power of Understanding and Reasoning, which he hath received from God, whereby he is able to discern the Being, and in some Measure know the Will of his Maker; as also a Conscience, whereby he reflects upon his own Behaviour, and is displeased or pleased, according as he acts agreeably or disagreeably to the Judgment of his own Mind.

3. God may be said farther to have *taught* Men by some extraordinary Persons raised up by Providence, and qualified to instruct others.

Such we Christians believe the Patriarchs, together with *Moses* and the Prophets, to have been. Such also were the Philosophers among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; some of whom have by their Writings

ings transmitted to us their Conceptions concerning God and Providence, and the Difference between moral Good and Evil, as also the Immortality of the human Soul, and at least the high Probability of a future State, of all which they have discoursed admirably well.

4. God may be said to have *taught* Men by the secret Motions and Influences of his Holy Spirit upon their Minds.

This the Scriptures do assert throughout; and there is nothing more reasonable to be believed of God, even without a Revelation, than that he who formed our Spirits, should be at all Times ready to influence them in a Way proper to their Make, conversing himself intimately with them, enlightening our Understandings, secretly admonishing and assisting our Souls, according as they apply themselves to him, and become capable of receiving Influence from him.

This may suffice for the *first* Particular, I proceed to consider,

II. Who they are, that may be said to have *heard and learned of the Father*, in order to their receiving any New Revelation from him.

They are,

1. Those who have obtained to worthy Apprehensions concerning God and natural Religion.

By worthy Apprehensions of God, I mean, that they should conceive of him, as a Being infinite in all Perfections, the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of the World; that they should look upon him as the Parent of the intellectual Part of the Universe; that they should apprehend him infinitely Good to all his Works, propitious to those who obey him, and determined to punish the Transgressors of his Laws.

By worthy Apprehensions of natural Religion, I mean, that they should see and own the eternal
and

300 *The Qualifications requisite towards*

and immutable Difference between moral Good and Evil, together with the necessary Obligation to chuse one, and refuse the other; that they should discern the Fitness of yielding Worship to God, of exercising Justice and Charity towards Men, of mortifying our Passions, and of improving our Minds.

And whoever hath these Apprehensions well settled in his Mind, will always be ready to embrace a Doctrine which comes from God, and approves itself to be worthy of him; which explains and heightens the Obligations which reasonable Creatures are under to what is good. But then,

2. There must be added to this, that those who have *heard and learned of the Father*, have altogether with these Apprehensions fixt in their Minds an honest Purpose and Resolution to act agreeably to them.

The Perfection of a reasonable Creature consists in the Regularity of his Will and Affections, as much, if not more than in the Improvement of his Understanding. Nay, the very Use of any Information given to the Understanding is, that it may direct the Will; and consequently the Design of *God's teaching*, is to improve the Temper of our Souls; so that no Man can be said to have *heard and learned of the Father*, 'till he have formed his Temper by the Knowledge which is imparted to him from God, and reduced his Notions to practice.

And here in Truth lies the main Difficulty with most Men. Their Apprehensions would be more easily set right, if their Wills and Affections were but subdued; but this latter requiring some Pains they too often make their Judgments comply with their Inclinations, and suffer their Wills to conduct their Understandings.

III. It may therefore be worth the while to enquire once more, what Qualifications are requisite

both

both to *the Hearing and Learning of the Father*, and *coming to the Son* : I shall mention only the *three* following.

1. A serious and composed Temper of Spirit.

This is a Qualification necessary in a particular Manner, where God is the Teacher, and Religion the Subject of the Enquiry ; which are Matters of the greatest Weight, and consequently such as require the most sedate Temper of Mind in those who are conversant about them.

2. Another Qualification for *bearing and learning of the Father* is, a good Degree of Humility.

It becomes us, when God is our Teacher, to have mean Thoughts of ourselves ; we should remember that our Minds are finite, narrow and imperfect, and stand in Need of the constant Direction of the first and great Mind. We should also consider that we are unworthy of such a Favour as to be *taught of God*, as we are conscious of too much Indisposition to do, and consequently to know the Will of God.

For by this Means we shall readily submit our Wills to the Will of our Sovereign Lord ; and also demean ourselves towards other Men with a Regard due to those of the same Nature with ourselves, however they may differ in some other Respects.

And by the same Means we shall be disposed also to come to *the Son of God*, whose Institution lays before us abundance of humbling Considerations, and gives us in Charge such Precepts as cannot possibly consist with Pride, *Matt. xviii. 3, 4.*

Nay further, this Humility will dispose us to allow, that God may reveal to us that which we could not have found out ourselves ; and which when discovered we only know in part ; as well as oblige us to some Duties which are disagreeable to, though good for us ; and consequently will render us capable of divine Instruction.

Which

Which it will further do, by qualifying us to partake of the Illumination and Assistance of the divine Spirit, *which resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace to the Humble.*

3. The last Qualification is Purity of Heart.

For nothing can make us more indisposed to hear and learn either of the Father or the Son, than strong Habits of Vice indulged by us, or which comes to the same Issue, being deeply immersed in the sensual and animal Life.

Whoever is not furnished with the abovementioned Qualifications, and shall yet take upon him to deny the Truth of the Christian Religion, is no competent Judge in this Dispute; *Jesus Christ* may be the Son of God, and his Religion true, for any thing such a Man can know to the contrary.

The proud, and vain-glorious, and sensual Men are either wholly unconcerned in the Matter, or too evidently prejudiced to judge impartially; so that there lies an Appeal from them to the more serious, modest, humble, and honest Part of Mankind.

Having shewn what Qualifications are requisite towards the receiving a divine Revelation; I proceed to prove the Credibility of the Christian Religion from its intrinsic Evidence.

THE
CREDIBILITY
OF THE
Christian Revelation.

I TIM. i. 15.

This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners.

THE Credibility of the Christian Religion being the Subject I design to treat of, I will endeavour to make good the Assertion in our Text, and shew from the Nature and Reason of what is here affirmed, that it is a *credible Saying*, every Way worthy of God, and fit to be received by us, that *Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners*; and *that* whether we consider the *intrinsic* Evidence, it carries along with it, or the external Attestation which hath been given to it, I will begin with its *intrinsic* Evidence.

In doing this, the Words will lead me into a proper Method, by offering to our Consideration *these three* general Heads.

I. Who the Persons are, whom Christ came to save.

II. What Kind of Salvation he proposeth to them.

III. In what Way and Manner he hath, by his coming

coming into the World, wrought out this Salvation for them.

I. I shall consider who the Persons are, whom Christ came to save.

The Apostle calls them *Sinners*, that is, the whole Race of Mankind, who by Disobedience had exposed themselves to the just Displeasure of God. Now I think it may much conduce to our present Design to shew that these Creatures were fit Objects of the Maker's Tenderness expressed to them thro' his Son Jesus Christ; that considering their original Constitution, together with their Manner of falling from it, it was highly becoming God thus to appear in their Behalf.

It must be acknowledged, that the Method of our Salvation by the Gospel is the most surprising Thing that falls within the Compass of human Thought. See 1 Cor. ii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Eph. iii. 18, 19. We may as oft as we think of it, well cry out *Lord what is Man*.

But if we consider that God's Goodness is infinite, that he has a paternal Regard for us, that he *remembereth that we are but Dust*: If we take all that is proper in this Argument, both concerning God and Man, we shall then be forced to acknowledge, that *Sinners* were a proper Object of the divine Care in this extraordinary Manner.

Let us therefore take a View of the Persons so saved by Christ, both as *Men* and *Sinners*.

I. As they are *Men*.

As God's *Goodness* gave a Being at first to all Creatures, so it will necessarily induce him to take Care of them.

Now of all Creatures in this World, Man is the most excellent; nay we cannot conceive any Creature more excellent in Kind, tho' in Degree there may, in the Regions above.

Men's Bodies indeed, like other Animals,

for

formed out of the Dust of the Earth ; but with respect to their Souls, they are a *little lower than the Angels*, being created after the Image of God, which will appear by a View of ourselves.

The Resemblance of our Maker appears evidently in our natural Faculties, and much more in our moral. Our Souls indeed are invisible, but they evidence their Being by their various Operations in our Bodies ; every Part of which they not only influence and govern, but by the Mediation of the Senses, they take in Notices from external Objects. They form Ideas of their own of various Kinds, inventing, compounding, dividing, &c. They can extend their Thoughts till they are lost in Eternity. They can acquaint themselves both with the material and immaterial World. From contemplating themselves, they can enlarge their Thoughts to other Beings ; they discern the Spirits of other Men, and find out and contemplate an unknown Number of spiritual Natures, till at last they ascend to God, and make such Discoveries of the divine Perfections, as create Admiration, Reverence, and Love ; and incline them to adore him, and obey his Commands.

Which the Soul is in some Measure capacitated to discern, by a Consideration of its own Nature, and the Relation it stands in to God, and to its fellow Creatures.

And, which is yet a higher Perfection than mere Knowledge, the Souls of Men can perceive the Will of God, and consequently their own Duty from secret Inclinations and Propensions which they feel within themselves, and of which they are apprehensive even in this degenerate State.

There is yet one Ability more, with which the human Soul is endued, not to be passed over, and that is Freedom or Liberty of choosing, and a Power of acting according to such Choice.

Which Power is a Perfection whereby we are

made to resemble God himself, who always chooseth and acteth according to the eternal and immutable Laws of Goodness, and to do voluntarily that which is acceptable and rewardable by him.

But then as Men can at the same Time chuse that which is evil, it must be owned an Imperfection; but such a one as seems necessarily to result from the Condition of a Creature, which can have no such absolute Perfection, as necessarily to oblige it to determine itself always the right Way. But this may suffice to shew the Dignity of the human Soul with respect to its Liberty.

And had Men always acted according to the Design of their Beings, the excellency of their Nature would have plainly appeared in a whole World of intelligent Agents, exercising all the Faculties before mentioned regularly and orderly, which would have rendered their Abode here perfectly easy and comfortable; and if God should have been pleased to have translated them to any superior Regions, as a Reward of their Obedience here, they would there also have spent a happy Eternity, in the Enjoyment of their Maker, themselves, and one another.

I mention their Translation to some other Regions, because the Powers of the Soul, which I have discoursed of, imply nothing but what is immaterial, and consequently immortal. And if Men had not sinned, God would not have suffered the Body to have died, but would have assigned both Soul and Body such Places of Residence, as might have been fit for sinless Men.

What I have hitherto been discoursing concerning the Nature of Mankind, appears highly reasonable. And I believe it must be thought a Proceeding very worthy of an infinitely good God to concern himself in some extraordinary Way, for the Restoration and Salvation of Beings, whom he had formed after such an excellent Manner.

Which

Which brings me,

II. To consider Men as *Sinners*, and see whether under that Denomination also they are not proper Objects of the divine Compassion, to which purpose it may be proper,

1. To take into Consideration the Nature of Sin.
2. To observe the miserable Consequences of it to Mankind.
3. To enquire how Men were drawn into the Commission of it.

1. To take into Consideration the Nature of Sin.

To sin, is for a Creature to rebel against his Creator and Preserver; 'tis to oppose his Will to the Will of the supreme Lord of the World; 'tis to disturb that excellent Order, which is appointed by him who made all Things very good; 'tis for a Man to do that which God will not allow himself to do; in a Word, 'tis thwarting the true Judgment of a Man's own Mind, and acting contrary to the very Design of his own Nature.

Now whatever is monstrous in Nature, we abhor; and whatever is endued with moral Principles, ought to feel a Detestation in his Soul, when he considers the Nature of Sin.

Doth not every ingenuous Mind detest the Undutifulness of a Child to a tender Parent? Do not all good Men abhor Ingratitude? Who is there that does not despise the Man that degrades himself, by doing Things unworthy of his Birth and Education?

Why all this and more is in the Nature of Sin committed against God.

And is it not credible then, that so holy and good a Being as God is, should be inclined to save such of his Creatures as are capable of Salvation from so great an Evil as Sin is? And that he should effect it in such a Way as may convince them at once of his Compassion towards them, and his Abhorrence of their evil Doings.

But to render this the more evident, we may,

2. Observe the miserable Consequences of Sin to Mankind, and that either separately, or in general.

The State of every particular Sinner is extremely miserable. A Man has no sooner consented to Iniquity, but he is naturally filled with great Uneasiness of Mind; his Understanding and Reason, and Conscience directing and leading him one Way, whilst his Appetites hurry him the other. He is covered with Shame and Fear from a Consciousness of having done an unworthy Act; and an Apprehension of the Mischiefs that may follow from the Displeasure of God, who has made us sensible of his Displeasure, even in this World, by the many Evils we are exposed to during a short Life.

And besides all this, the Soul being apprehensive of its own immortal Nature, cannot but forebode the perpetual Continuance of its present Infelicity with the Addition of unknown Evils in a future State, the very Forethought of which must be very terrible, even in this Life.

And if the Condition of every particular Sinner be so full of Misery, how much more shall we discover, if we take a View of the whole Mass of Mankind.

If we might be allowed to take our View from the History of *Moses*, it would give us a very melancholy Prospect.

The very first Man that was born slew his Brother, and from that Time Wickedness increased so fast, that God was forced to drown the whole World except *Noah* and his Family.

And after the Flood, in little more than four hundred Years Idolatry had spread itself so universally that God called *Abram* from his Country and Kingdom to preserve him and his Posterity in the Worship of the one true God.

And if we should consider the State of Mankind according

according to all other Accounts given of it, we shall find that Men were soon degenerated into the most unnatural Practices. See St. Paul's Representation of the Pagan World, *Rom. i. 21. 23. 1 Cor. x. 20. Rom. i. 26. Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19.*

There were indeed some few to be found who had not forsaken God, and degenerated into Vice in so heinous a Degree, but these were very few.

There were also the *Jews*, whom God had by an extraordinary Providence taken out of the Mass of Mankind, in order to instruct them in a better Manner. But even these were very hardly kept to the Observance of the Laws which God had given.

'Tis true, God had not left Mankind, much less the *Jews*, without various Means proper for the preserving of them from these Corruptions. But all the Methods of his divine Providence for their Good were rendered ineffectual by them.

And was not this such a deplorable State, as might move a God of infinite Goodness to find out some more effectual Method for the Recovery of this his ruined Creation? But this will still appear more becoming the divine Nature, if we enquire,

3. How Men were drawn into the Commission of Sin.

The Case represented by *Moses*, which is what the Christian Revelation takes for granted, was certainly very compassionate. *Gen. iii.*

Our first Parents, while unexperienced, were set upon by a subtle Enemy, who first attacked the weaker Sex, and by her prevailed upon the Man, inveigling them by a false Suggestion, making use of their sensitive Powers to baffle their intellectual, and persuading them to do a rash Act.

But waving this, and taking human Nature as it appears, the Circumstances of Sinners will still appear much to be commiserated.

For although Man was certainly made upright, yet being endued with Liberty, he must at the very best be fallible. Those who first sinned may very well be supposed to have done it, before their good Habits were confirmed by Experience, and that there was somewhat of Surprize, as well as Rashness in the Action. And those who have since grown up from a State of Infancy, are still in harder Circumstances. Their bodily Tempers, which influence their Minds, can be no better than what their Parents gave them. Their Senses are for many Years exercised, before their Reason is awake. They are surrounded with all manner of Temptations. They are for a long Time unexperienced, and many of them ruined by a careless Education.

'Tis true, not one of all these Considerations will excuse the Sinner, because the first Sinner, whoever he was, being supposed to be made upright, 'tis not to be conceived he could have fallen, but by neglecting to depend upon his Maker, and applying himself to him.

For an intelligent Creature not to depend upon God upon all Occasions, is an inexcusable Fault; and had those who first consented to Iniquity done so, God who made them, would have afforded them his Assistance: Nay, in this degenerate State, God hath made such Provision thro' *Jesus Christ*, that nothing but wilful Neglect of God can ruin us. So that what I alledged under this last Head, does not excuse the Sinner; but yet (which is what I alledged them for) it renders his Case exceedingly compassionate to a God of infinite Goodness and Mercy.

Having shewed who the Persons were that *Jesus Christ* came into the World to save, I come now,

II. To consider what Kind of Salvation he proposeth to them.

If we reflect upon the Condition of Sinners, 'twill

be easy to discern what Kind of Salvation they stood in need of, which is the very same, which our Saviour has promised to us in his Gospel, his Design in coming into the World being to provide for the Necessities of fallen Man; with Reference to which Necessities, *Salvation* must imply both a Deliverance from those many Evils, to which Sin had exposed them, and a Restitution of those many Blessings which by Transgression they had forfeited.

Thus for Instance, the *Salvation* of Men by Jesus Christ, consists in his delivering them from the just Displeasure of their Maker, together with a compleat Restoration of them to the divine Favour, in the setting them free from the Disorders introduced into the several Faculties of their Souls, together with that Uneasiness of Mind which necessarily followed, as also from those Miseries to which their Bodies likewise were exposed, either as a Consequence or a Punishment of the Corruption of their Minds, in restoring perfectly that Frame and Temper of Spirit, which is natural to an intelligent and reasonable Creature, together with that healthful State of Body, that sound Constitution of the whole Man, which would have been the Effect or the Reward of Innocency and Integrity; and finally, in giving them an everlasting State of Happiness in the next World.

All this is the Design of our Saviour's Undertaking, and highly worthy of so great and so good a Being as God is.

I come now,

III. To consider in what Way and Manner *Jesus Christ* by his coming into the World hath wrought out this *Salvation* for Sinners.

The *Nature* of Man, and the Condition of Sinners, make it credible, that God should concern himself for their Recovery.

'Tis also credible, that if God should offer *Salva-*

tion to Men, it would be such a Kind of Salvation as I have been describing. But besides all this, the Method in which Christ has obtained this Salvation is so excellent in itself, so suitable to the Nature of Things, so agreeable to all just Apprehensions, both concerning God and ourselves, so well fitted to our Necessities and our reasonable Desires, that I am verily persuaded, nothing but a Want of understanding it, can occasion any Man to hesitate at the Belief of it.

I own we weak Creatures are not capable of diving into all the Depths of this admirable Dispensation; but yet so much we may discern, as may cause us to admire and adore the divine Perfections display'd therein, and incline us to believe the Divinity of this Revelation, even before we come to consider the external Attestation of God to it. This therefore is next to be done, *viz.* to contemplate the Method in which *Christ Jesus* by his coming into the World saveth Sinners.

The most comprehensive Notion we can frame of our Saviour's Undertaking is, that he acted as a *Mediator* between God and Man.

That our Saviour sustained the Character of a *Mediator*, is evident throughout the Scriptures. Those Persons, *viz.* *Moses*, the *Levitical Priests*, and particularly the High-Priest, who in the Old Testament are mentioned as *Types* of the *Messiah*, were a Sort of *Mediators* between God and the People of *Israel*.

As to the New Testament, it is superfluous to prove that our Saviour acted as *Mediator*. See 1 *Tim.* ii. 5. *Heb.* viii. 6. ix. 15. xii. 24. 1 *Cor.* viii. 6.

The Office of a *Mediator*, we know, is to make up a Difference between two Parties, that all Things may be managed suitably to the Condition, and agreeably to the Expectation of the Parties concerned.

But

But before we consider the particular Way in which our great *Mediator* has discharged this his Undertaking, I will shew in general, that it was perfectly agreeable both to the Nature of God and of fallen Man, that there should be a *Mediator*.

That this has been the general Apprehension of Mankind, that it becomes us to approach God by a *Mediator*, is evident from all the Records of ancient and almost universal Practice.

As to the Original of this Notion, I shall not venture to determine; what I at present insist upon, that this is agreeable to the natural Apprehensions of Mankind: insomuch, that tho' the *Pagan* Theologers exceedingly erred in appointing to themselves *Mediators*, yet they had good Ground for conceiving a *Mediator* necessary; if we contemplate the Perfection of the divine Nature, or the Imperfection of our own.

God is infinite in all Perfections. Men dependent, and weak Creatures, and at an infinite Distance from him who made us. And altho', if we had retained our native Integrity, the Consideration of the divine Goodness might have emboldened us to approach to him with Freedom; yet being apprehensive of his infinite Purity, and conscious of our Apostacy from him, and the Impurity contracted thereby, we must be ashamed and afraid to approach to him of ourselves, and cannot but wish that we could meet with some proper Person to mediate between us and him.

This was that which made our first Parents fly from the Presence of God, and 'tis the very same Thing which makes every Sinner apt still to run further from him.

Thus much I thought fit to premise with Respect to this Method of our Salvation in general, viz. to shew the Agreeableness and Fitness of our Saviour's sustaining the Character of *Mediator*, both with Respect to God and Man.

I pro-

I proceed now to consider more particularly the Way in which our Saviour hath executed this Office.

According to the Account given of the Office of a *Mediator*, there must be these two general Designs, which our Saviour must be supposed to have carried on in the Execution of it.

I. To do whatsoever might satisfy God, in order to his being reconciled to fallen Man. And

II. To do also whatsoever should be found necessary in Behalf of fallen Man, in order to reconcile them to God.

I. To do whatsoever might satisfy God, in order to his being reconciled to fallen Man.

God, both as he is a Being infinitely greater than his Creatures, and as he was the Person offended, ought first to be considered in the Mediation, and that Satisfaction be given him, should be a principal Part of the Mediator's Care.

Some perhaps may be apt to think, that a God of infinite Goodness will be satisfied by the Repentance and Amendment of his weak and fallible Creature. But if they consider the Matter to the Bottom, they will be of another Opinion.

I allow, that this is all that can be done by, or expected from the Sinner; and a God of infinite Goodness will no doubt approve of such his Behaviour. But notwithstanding this, there may be something farther necessary, or at least fit to be done for the Honour of God, and which he may therefore determine shall be done for his Satisfaction, before he enters upon Terms with his apostate Creature.

For Instance, the *Holiness* of God and his Justice as Governor of the World, ought to be satisfied.

1. The *Holiness* of God.

By the *Holiness* of God in Scripture are comprehended

ended all the moral Perfections of the divine Nature, particularly his entire Love of Goodness, and his irreconcilable Hatred of all Evil, or Sin. See *Habac. i. 13. Psal. v. 4, 5.*

And Reason, as well as Scripture, assure us, this must be so. From whence it will appear very reasonable, that if a Mediator should interpose between God and Man, he should take care that the Holiness of God should be rendered conspicuous to all the World; and that the Method in which God should declare himself reconcileable to Sinners should be such as might consist with, nay express his Abhorrence of their Sins.

2. The Justice of God, as Governor of the World, was also to be regarded in this Case.

The supreme Lord of the Universe must from the Purity of his Nature be just and righteous in his Government. And as it is a Part of a righteous Governor to make a Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked; so it is likewise another Effect of the same Righteousness, in shewing Mercy to repenting Offenders, to make them thoroughly sensible of the Heinousness of their Offence.

And this was so much the more necessary, because the whole Race of Mankind being corrupted, if God had been silent in this Case, they would have thought him altogether such a one as themselves; and have set their Hearts fully to do evil.

And as God had threatened, that in the Day in which our first Parents had transgressed they should surely die, this makes it still more requisite, that the Justice of God should be publicly vindicated, before he should offer Terms of Reconciliation; and that if he should in Mercy forbear to execute the Threatning in its utmost Severity, yet he should however make the Sinner sensible of his Deserts.

It was very fit also that the Wisdom of God should be regarded by our Mediator; it being an Instance

Instance of *Wisdom* in a Governor to render his Authority awful to his Subjects, and never to pass by notorious Disobedience without making some severe Remarks upon it.

Now the particular Method which our *Mediator* hath taken, did eminently tend to these Purposes. For,

1. Our *Mediator* gave Honour to these Attributes of God by asserting, and publishing, and explaining the Law of God, which had been violated by Men; I mean the great Law of Nature, divided into two Tables, requiring the Love of God and Man.

What our Lord declared over and above the meer Law of Nature, namely, concerning the Mercy of God in forgiving Sinners, upon their Repentance and Faith in him, was become necessary, by Reason of Transgression; for Repentance implies an Acknowledgment of our Unworthiness in offending God, by violating his Law; and Faith in God, through a *Mediator*, implies our Sense of Guilt, and Need of Mercy.

But besides this, our Lord did openly declare the Righteousness of the divine Law, as first given to Man, by explaining it fully, and inculcating it afresh upon us, and insisting upon the absolute Necessity of a sincere Obedience to it, even in this imperfect State, in which we are not capable of yielding that which is absolutely perfect.

2. Our *Mediator* gave Honour to these Attributes in complying strictly and fully with the Law of God in his own Person, and thereby giving a complete Instance of Obedience in that Nature which had transgressed. But,

3. He did so in the highest Degree by all the Sufferings he underwent upon our Account, by which he testified in the most significant Manner that was possible the fixed Love of God to Righteousness,

his unalterable Hatred to Sin, his impartial Justice in governing the World, the Excellency of the Laws he had given to Men, and the Danger of transgressing them.

And upon our *Mediator* thus suffering for us, new Terms of Mercy and Reconciliation were offered to us, upon which Account he himself calls his Blood the *Blood of the new Covenant*, viz. that Blood in the shedding of which the new Covenant between God and Man, for Acceptance upon Repentance and Faith, was made and ratified.

Having shewed that our *Mediator* has done whatsoever might satisfy God, in order to his being reconciled to Men, I proceed now,

II. To shew how our Lord hath executed the Office of a *Mediator* in providing for the Necessities of fallen Men, and doing whatsoever was requisite in order to the reconciling them to their Maker.

To do which, it will be requisite to take a distinct View of the various Necessities of fallen Men, which were to be provided for by a *Mediator*, in order to the reconciling them to God ; and to shew that *Jesus Christ* by his coming into the World, hath so abundantly provided for all these Necessities, and that in a Manner so far surpassing any other Method, which our Thoughts are able to suggest to us, as thereby farther to recommend his Institution to our Belief and Acceptance as worthy of God, and fit for us ; and this we may do under the following Heads.

First, Men by their Apostacy had fallen into a Suspicion and Jealousy with respect to the divine Goodness, and an Alienation of Mind from God, as the Consequence thereof.

Secondly, They were degenerated into an Ignorance of God, and of themselves, and of the several Particulars of their Duty.

Thirdly, They had contracted an Indisposition and

and Inability to comply with the divine Will, when fully and clearly manifested to them.

Fourthly, After all, they were under an Incapacity of removing many other evil, and mischievous Consequences, which their Sins had exposed them to, and obtaining for themselves that complete Salvation which they stood in need of.

First, Men by their Apostacy had fallen into a Suspicion and Jealousy, with respect to the divine Goodness, and an Alienation of Mind from God, as the Consequence thereof.

This I formerly took Notice of, when I mentioned the Case of our first Parents. I observed likewise, that this is the Case of all Sinners, that have not hardened themselves by a long Custom of Sinning. And if we take a View of Mankind, antecedently to any known Declaration of God's Mercy to them by some express Revelation, we shall find, that there arises an Awe and Dread from the Consciousness of Guilt, together with a Dissatisfaction as to the Ways and Means of appeasing the divine Displeasure, the Consequence of which must be a want of that filial Love and Reverence, which is due to the great Father of all.

And this I take to have been the apparent Ground of those many superstitious Practices in the *Pagan* World, whereby they attempted to atone their supposed Deities, not only by sacrificing all Sorts of Animals, but even the Blood of their Sons and Daughters; for tho' Sacrifice was of divine Institution, yet it was by Degrees corrupted, and Men fell into the Use of such Sacrifices, not as God had appointed, but their own foolish Imaginations. It was from their corrupted Apprehensions of the divine Nature, that they invented Expiations, which were neither fit for God to accept, nor Men to offer: But it was their Consciousness of Guilt conspiring with an ancient Tradition, which did naturally

move

move them to think some Expiation or other requisite, and forasmuch as they did not well know, what might be acceptable, there still remained a Dissatisfaction and Uneasiness after all their Attempts that Way.

But not to look so far abroad. Let but any Man faithfully consult his own Conscience, when he has done any thing evil ; and he will find, that his Guilt has made him not only ashamed, but afraid too of the Almighty ; it has more or less estranged his Mind from that excellent Being, rendered him shy of addressing himself to him, and doubtful of his Acceptance, unless from the Encouragement which the Gospel gives to Repentance, he quickly bethought himself, and recovered his Temper again. And it requires both a great Sense of the divine Goodness founded upon the Doctrine of the Gospel, and a Temper like to that of God therein represented, for a Man that knows and feels what it is wilfully to have transgressed the Laws of his Maker, firmly to believe and hope in him.

And all this seems to arise from the Make of our Souls, which God has formed so, that this Uneasiness should naturally arise from our doing amiss, and be as it were a Restraint upon us ; that we might not only apprehend the Malignity of Sin from reasoning, but might also be sensible of it by inward feeling.

'Tis true we have implanted in us natural Apprehensions also of the divine Goodness and Mercy ; but forasmuch as the Holiness and the Justice of God are as evident to our Thoughts as his Goodness is, there is such a Foundation of Fear, as well as of Hope laid in our Minds, as will be apt to keep a Sinner at a very uneasy Distance from his Maker, till he shall be pleased some Way or other to reveal his Mercy to him.

God hath indeed given many Intimations of his kind

kind Intentions to Men all along, by sparing, preserving, and providing for them, &c. See *Acts* xiv. 17.

Nay he hath, as we Christians believe, laid a Foundation for the Hope of Mankind by his gracious Promise made to our first Parents. *Gen.* iii. 15. which to the *Jews* was confirmed and explained by following Predictions, and might, by the Help of an obscure Tradition, be the Occasion also of reviving Men's Hopes in God, even in other Nations; all which was but an imperfect Edition of the Gospel Revelation. But by *this* only we have the Ground of our Fear wholly removed, and our Hopes clear and lively.

For nothing can be conceived of equal Force for restoring the Faith and Hope of Mankind in their offended Creator, with the Consideration of his having sent his only Son into the World to become our *Mediator*. See *Tit.* iii. 4. *Rom.* viii. 32.

The Condescension of our Saviour to take our Nature upon him by the Appointment of God, was such a Declaration of the Almighty's Love of, and Care for us, as must create in us a lively Hope, that he had merciful Designs for our Good. But if we add to this what our Lord declared, and suffered for us, there can be no Suspicion for the future.

This was one main Design of his to declare the good Will of his heavenly Father toward the Children of Men. See *John* iii. 16, 17. *Luke* iv. 18.

His whole Conversation was one continued Declaration of the divine Goodness and Compassion to Sinners, he doing all he did in the Name, and by the Authority of the Father. See *Matt.* ix. 12, 13. xi. 28, 29.

And lest all this should not be sufficient for Mens having a firm Hope and Faith in God, he laid down his Life for them. *Matt.* xxvi. 28.

Mankind in general were apprehensive of the Need

Need of a Sacrifice to be made for Sins, being led into this Apprehension, partly by an ancient Tradition, and partly by a Sense of Guilt, and as the Consequence thereof, great Doubts and Fears concerning the divine Acceptance; and the *Jews* had been admonished of the Use of Sacrifices by the Law of *Moses*; our Mediator therefore once for all offered up such a Sacrifice, as might for ever put an End to the Use of that Rite, and satisfy Men, that complete Expiation was now made for them. See *Heb.* ix. 13. 14. x. 4. 10. 14. 19. 20. 21. 22.

And here we may observe the Wisdom of God, in disposing the Method of our Reconciliation in such Manner, that by our Saviour's dying upon the Cross as a Sacrifice for Sin, our *Mediator* both satisfied the Holiness and Justice of God, and removed that Fear from Men which possessed them by Reason of Guilt.

Having done with the *first* of those *Necessities*, for which our *Mediator* provided, by his coming into the World, I proceed to the next.

Secondly, Men by their Apostacy were likewise degenerated into gross Ignorance of God, and of themselves, and of the several Particulars of their Duty.

What Knowledge of God Men are capable of in this lapsed State, if they would attend to the Suggestions of their Minds, need not be disputed. If we would know what Need the World stood in of Instruction from God, 'twill be proper to examine how ignorant the World was when our Lord came into it, and how the Case stands, wheresoever the Gospel is not yet divulged.

They were not only false, but monstrous Opinions, which the *Pagans* had generally entertained concerning the Deity. *They changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped the Creature, more than the Creator.* They were insensible of the spi-

ritual Nature of God, and had gross Misapprehensions of his moral Perfections, ascribing those Qualities to their God, as would be a Dishonour to any reasonable Creature.

Nor were the Vulgar only misled into these gross Errors; but Men of all Ranks and Orders among them, even those *who professed themselves wise, became Fools* in this Respect.

But as they were ignorant of God, so they were of themselves too.

They had lost the Tradition of being descended from one common Stock, as likewise of the Institution of Marriage by God himself in our first Parents. They were unacquainted with the History of Man's Body being formed out of the Dust, and inspired with the Breath of God, and consequently did not so clearly discern the Difference between the two Parts, of which themselves were constituted. They were uncertain of the spiritual and immortal Nature of the Soul, and at a Loss as to the Condition of a future State. They were sensible of disorderly Appetites, but could give no tolerable Account how they were introduced into human Nature; nor did they apprehend the Necessity of returning to the State they were degenerated from, or of that supernatural Aid, which was necessary to that purpose. In fine, they knew not why they were made, nor to what End they ought to direct their Lives. And tho' there were some few among them, who had attained to better Apprehensions of Things; yet, as these Apprehensions were very imperfect and uncertain, so they did not express themselves in that plain and authoritative Manner, which was likely to render what they said useful to the generality of Mankind.

And as this was the State of the World before the Revelation of Christianity, so it is much the same in those Countries, which are still *Pagan*.

But our *Mediator* has made a plentiful Provision for this Necessity of fallen Men ; and that whether we consider his *Doctrine* or his *Life*, the former as an *Instruction*, the latter as an *Example* to us, to make us perfectly acquainted with God, and his Will concerning us.

I begin with the *Doctrine* of our Lord.

I. What it teacheth us concerning God.

II. Concerning ourselves. And

III. The Rules which it gives us for the Direction of our Tempers and our Lives.

I. What it teacheth us concerning God.

The Sum of the Christian *Doctrine* touching this Point is to this Purpose, *viz.* That there is but one God ; that he is a Spirit, eternal, incomprehensible, and unchangeable, infinite in Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and in all Perfections ; that he made and preserves all Things ; that he particularly concerns himself in the Affairs of Mankind ; that he observes all our Ways, and that as he has given us Intimations of his Will, so he expects we should obey it ; that he is pleased when we do well, and displeased when we do otherwise ; that he is desirous of our Welfare, of which he has given us many Proofs, to excite our Faith and Hope in him, as well as to engage our Obedience.

As to what Christianity hath farther revealed to us concerning God, 'tis to the following Purpose, *viz.* That the Father hath actually concerned himself for the Recovery of sinful Men ; and that he hath done so by sending his Son into the World to redeem us, and by giving his holy Spirit to sanctify us, which is more than we could have known concerning God without a Revelation.

Now, as to the more general Part of the Revelation, *viz.* That God hath actually concerned himself for our Recovery, this is highly *credible*, and worthy of our *Acceptation* ; for if it be a reasonable

Apprehension concerning God, that he would some Way provide for the Recovery of those Creatures, as were capable of it, it must certainly be reasonable to hearken to a Revelation, which assures us that he hath done so.

As to the particular Way in which God hath done this, *viz.* by the Father's sending his Son to redeem us, and his holy Spirit to sanctify us, this as it is a Matter of pure Revelation, so it must be owned that it will lead us into some Apprehensions concerning the Deity, which we could not have formed of ourselves. For in our Reasoning concerning the divine Nature, our Thoughts would have stopped at the *Father* of all, and reached no further.

But this ought to be no Objection against Christianity; for after all the Controversies upon the Trinity, 'tis agreed to by all, that there is but one God, and that however the Christian Trinity is to be explained, it must ever be supposed consistent with this Article. *Mark* xii. 29. And why might not God intimate to us something of his Nature, which we could not have thought of ourselves, any more than we can fully comprehend it, when it is thus intimated to us? How should we come to know, that it is impossible there should have been eternally, of and with the Father, a Son and a Spirit, partaking of the divine Nature, and essential to it? And if we cannot, we ought not to make this an Objection to the Christian Revelation.

Having shewn what our Lord's *Doctrine* teaches us concerning God, I proceed now,

II. To shew what our Saviour has taught us concerning ourselves.

Now with Respect to ourselves, the *Doctrine* of our Saviour has confirmed to us, what the Light of Nature and Reason, if duly used, might have discovered concerning human Nature, or else hath added something beyond what we could have known that Way.

Thus for Instance, that we were made by God ; that we have an immaterial and immortal Spirit, as well as fleshly Bodies ; that tho' our Bodies decay and die, our Souls will live in another State ; that we are reasonable Creatures, and are accountable for our Actions ; that our Passions are apt to rebel against our Reason, which must needs be a Corruption in our Nature, since it is not credible, that so good a Being as God is, should have originally formed us in so disorderly a State. Such Apprehensions as these the best of Men among the *Pagans* were apt to entertain, from the mere Light of Reason ; but their Apprehensions of these Things were very uncertain.

But all this the Doctrine of our Saviour has fully assured us of : The Account which we have of ourselves, by the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelation joined together, is such as lets us into the perfect Knowledge of the Original and the Design of our Beings ; how we came out of God's Hands ; how we have abused ourselves ; and consequently what is to be done either by or for us, in order to our Recovery.

Neither is there any thing therein but what is reasonable to be believed, and what improves our natural Apprehensions concerning ourselves ; as will appear, if we consider what is said by *Moses* concerning the Creation of our first Parents, and the happy Circumstances God had put them in, 'till by giving Way to their Appetites and Passions, they disobeyed him, and so brought Misery upon themselves and Posterity. Sin was the Beginning of all our Evils ; and consequently, if ever we hope to be happy, it must be by having the Image of God repaired in us, by being restored to his Favour, by having our Souls recovered to their due Temper, by the Communication of divine Grace, by having our Bodies also, after their Dissolution, reunited to

our Spirits, by the Almighty Power, so that we may be perfect, according to our primitive Constitution; and finally, by having perfect Health restored to the whole Man.

This is plainly the Substance of what the Christian Doctrine teacheth us concerning ourselves. I come now to consider,

III. Those Rules which the Doctrine of our Saviour hath laid down for the Management of our Tempers and our Lives, which do further recommend the Method in which our *Mediator* hath obtained *Salvation for Sinners*.

I shall here take a View of the Precepts of Christianity, according to the usual Distinction, as they concern our Demeanour towards God, our Neighbour, or ourselves.

I. As they concern our Demeanour towards God.

The Sum of the Precepts left us by our Lord and his Apostles, with Respect to God, is, that we should fear and reverence him as the greatest and best of Beings; that we should love him as our heavenly Father; that we should depend upon him for what we want; that we should be deeply sensible of his Goodness to us, and put our Trust in him for whatsoever he shall see truly good for us; that we should acquiesce in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards us; that we should esteem his Image as our highest Perfection, and his Favour as our chief Happiness; and therefore above all Things endeavour to resemble, and to be accepted by him; that we should make his Glory our ultimate End; that as we should be thus inwardly affected towards God, so we should take all Opportunities of expressing the Sense of our Minds, by our Words and Actions; that we should frequently address ourselves to him, as to our God and Father, acknowledging his infinite Perfections; that

we should give him unfeigned Thanks for his Mercies towards us, and pray to him for a Supply of all our Wants ; and above all, that we should testify our Regard to him, by obeying his Will all the Days of our Lives.

All that I have hitherto mentioned are Instances of natural Religion towards God ; and that they are more particularly and fully expressed by the Christian, than ever they were by any other Institution, cannot be denied by any who have read the New Testament.

To which I might add, that the Gospel farther teacheth us to repent of all our Offences committed against God ; and to express this our Repentance by Confession, Sorrow, and firm Resolutions and Endeavours of Amendment ; all which are farther Instances of natural Religion towards God ; and they are what the Christian Revelation very much insists upon, withal encouraging us to hope for the Favour of God, through the Mediation of our Redeemer, upon these Terms.

And here Christianity comes in to the Relief and Assistance of *natural* Religion. For whereas by the mere Light of Reason we could only have thought it our Duty to repent of our Sins, and so have thrown ourselves upon the Mercy of God, but must have remained uncertain how far, or in what Manner he would have accepted our Repentance. The Gospel has taught us to address God in the Name, and through the Mediation of his Son, cloathed in our Nature, dying for our sakes, and living with him to make Intercession for us, and to expect all good Things from the Hands of our heavenly Father, by his Mediation and Intercession for us.

After which our Religion hath thoroughly discharged us from all those external and burthenfome Observances, which the Law of *Moses* had enjoined

the *Jews*, or the Superstition of the rest of Mankind had imposed upon themselves, appointing only two external Rites, which were plain and easy, and very proper for the Uses for which they were instituted, *viz.* one of the washing with Water, in the Name of the blessed Trinity, at our Admittance to the Christian Profession, representing that inward Purification which we profess to aim at; and the other partaking of Bread broken, and Wine poured out, as a perpetual Memorial of the great Sacrifice which our Mediator offered up for the Remission of our Sins.

I proceed,

2. To those Rules which the Christian Revelation has given us, as to our Demeanour towards our Neighbour.

The Gospel having enjoined the *loving our Neighbour as ourselves*, it enjoins by a necessary Consequence whatsoever can be expected from one Man towards another. And therefore, lest any one should pretend to love his Neighbour, without shewing his Love by the natural Effects of it, our Lord enjoined his Disciples the Act in as extensive Terms as he did the Principle. *Matt.* vii. 12. And though I will not say that the Christian Institution hath herein imposed upon us any thing new, any thing but what is natural and reasonable, if all things be considered, yet it must be owned, that it hath raised our Duty towards our Neighbour to an Height above what has been thought necessary under any other Institution whatsoever; particularly in the Instances of bearing Affronts, forgiving Injuries, loving of Enemies, and doing good for evil. See *Matt.* v. 38, 39, 43, 44, 45, 48.

To conclude this Head, the Christian Revelation teaches every Man to look upon himself as a Member of the universal Body of Men; and as in the first Place to make the Glory of God his ultimate

mate End, so next to that, to promote as much as lies in him the Good of Mankind ; always to prefer the public Interest to his own private Advantage ; and to exercise all possible Kindness towards every Person. All which Precepts would render the World very happy, if we might once see them exemplified in Practice. But to render this Argument compleat, I proceed to consider,

3. The Rules which the Christian Revelation hath given us, with Respect to the due Government of ourselves ; and if these likewise prove as reasonable and useful as the former, we shall have a farther Confirmation of our Christian Faith.

Now the Sum of these is, that we should make it our daily Care to improve our Spirits ; and in order to that End, should keep our Bodies in due Subjection to them, and our Passions under the Government of Reason ; that we should be modest and humble, meek, and patient, and contented, under any Circumstances, in which God's Providence has placed us ; that we should be temperate and chaste, as those who are sensible that our Perfection and Happiness doth not consist in sensual, but spiritual Enjoyments ; that we should abstain from unlawful and unnatural sensual Pleasures ; and use those which are lawful and natural with Moderation ; that we should eradicate all our corrupt Inclinations ; that we should set our Affections on Things above ; that to this Purpose we should mortify and subdue our Flesh, refine our Spirits, and so prepare and qualify ourselves for the Company, the Employments, and the Pleasures of the heavenly Regions.

That these are the Precepts of Christianity, the Adversaries of our Religion are so far from denying that some of them make it their grand Objection against the Christian Religion, that it obligeth all who adhere to it, to such strict Rules, which, as they imagine, are too severe for human Nature.

This

This they object against the Christian Precepts of Temperance and Chastity; but especially of Self-denial and Mortification.

As to the Christian Precepts of Temperance and Chastity in general, they are evidently for the good of Mankind even in this Life, as well as in order to the next.

As to the Exercises of Self-denial and Mortification, these sometimes are expedient in order to the rendering us Masters of ourselves. For considering the Violence of some Mens Appetites which they have raised by long Indulgence, it will be impossible for them ever to keep them within tolerable Bounds, without offering some Violence the other Way. And therefore the best *Pagan* Moralists agree with Christians, in making it a Part of a good Man to govern his Appetites.

And if the Christian Institution hath carried this Matter farther than the Moralists have done, it still justifies itself fully, by founding it upon such Principles as will support it.

For it proceeds upon such Suppositions as these following, *viz.* That the Soul of Man is immortal; that there will be certainly another Life infinitely more considerable than this is; that this is our State of Trial, in which we are to be trained up, and fitted by Degrees for that State, to which we are passing; that the true Way of preparing for the future Life, is by improving our Spirits, subduing our Flesh, and loosening ourselves from this vain World; that we shall be fully recompensed hereafter for whatsoever Pains it may cost us in thus disciplining ourselves here, *Matt. v. 29. Mark viii. 36. Matt. xix. 29. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 13.* Now these Things being taken for granted, I appeal to the Adversaries of our Religion themselves, to judge whether any Thing can be more reasonable, than to comply with the Rules which the Christian Institution

tion

tion hath given us, in the Instances I am now upon.

As to that Part of the Objection which more particularly relates to Marriage, a plain Answer may likewise be given to it, upon the Principles of Christianity.

For supposing the History of our first Parents as *Moses* relates it to be true, we have a plain Argument, that our Maker from the Beginning designed and appointed all that the Gospel requires of us. The Argument runs thus ; God at first made *one Man*, and *one Woman*, and he himself joined them together in so strict an Union, as to declare them thence forward to be but one. Why did he make no more Wives for *Adam* than *one*, but that he intended it as a Pattern to all Posterity ? And why did he so expressly declare the strict Union of these *two*, but in order to the preventing either the taking in a third, or the causeless Separation of these ?

And therefore 'tis remarkable, that *Lamech*, of the Posterity of *Cain*, *Gen. iv. 19.* is the first Man taken Notice of as a *Polygamist*, it being said of him as a Thing singular, that *he took unto him two Wives*. Neither is it unlikely that this was the Beginning of Degeneracy in the Family of *Setb* likewise, which seems to be intimated, *Gen. vi. 2.*

And the Reason why *Polygamy* prevailed so generally in the World, was their Ignorance of the History of *Moses*, and because the Tradition of the primitive Institution of Marriage was so soon lost after the Flood.

The *Jews* indeed had it in their sacred Records, but *Moses* upon Account of their utter Indisposition to comply with the Design and Law of God in Nature, did not particularly insist upon it ; tho' after all, *Malachi* seems to refer them to the Pattern of Marriage in Paradise, when he accuses them of being unfaithful to the conjugal Vow, *Mal. ii. 15.*
But

But however that may be, our Saviour revived this sacred Institution, and obliges his Disciples to comply with it.

And indeed, the near Equality of the Number of Males and Females born into the World, the Advantage according to the best Observations being on the side of the Males, being a meer Act of Providence, a Matter that can be ordered by no other than divine Appointment, seems a standing Declaration of the Will of God against *Polygamy*, and a Confirmation of the primitive Institution, as interpreted by Christ.

Besides all this, let but any Man weigh how much this Institution conduces to the Happiness of human Life, to that entire Friendship and Confidence that ought to be between a Man and his Wife, to the careful Education of their Children, to the Peace of the Family, and to the Good of the Public, and he will need no further Argument to convince him.

To conclude this whole Argument. There is no Precept in the Gospel which relates to the good Government of ourselves, but what is either apparently reasonable at the first View, or must necessarily appear so, as soon as ever the Suppositions and Principles of Christianity are taken in and considered. Doth it require a greater Degree of Humility, Patience, and Contentedness, than other Institutions have done? 'Tis because it makes us more sensible of our Vileness, because it represents to us the vast Difference between this Life and the next, and because it assures to depend on the divine Providence. Doth it carry its Rules of Temperance and Chastity, of Self-denial and Mortification to a greater Height? 'Tis because it convinceth us, that our Happiness consists in spiritual Improvements. Doth it lay a greater Restraint with respect to the conjugal Bed? 'Tis because in the next State, *we shall neither marry, nor be given in Marriage.*

Hav-

Having considered the *Doctrine* of our Saviour in relation to God, our Neighbour, and ourselves, I come next to consider his *Life*, by which he has left us an *Example* to excite us to a Practice agreeable to our Knowledge.

With respect to the Life of our Saviour, two general Heads are to be considered.

First, The external Condition and Circumstances of his Life.

Secondly, The Manner of his Behaviour in these Circumstances.

First, Let us take into Consideration the external Condition and Circumstances of our Saviour's Life.

He was born of a poor Woman ; his first Lodging was a Stable ; his Condition through the whole Course of his Life was without either Wealth or secular Honour, nay attended with Poverty and Disgrace ; and he suffered Death as a Malefactor. But all this Obscurity and Meanness of our Saviour's Condition, during his sojourning upon Earth, was designed as a proper Means for our Instruction.

It was in Truth a most severe Censure pass'd upon the Pride and Luxury of Men, and a powerful Argument to convince us of the Vanity and Emptiness of this World for the Son of God to accept of no better Entertainment in it.

It was this Condition which rendered our Saviour capable of exemplifying those admirable Virtues as were most opposite to the Vices into which Men were degenerated, and such Virtues as were most useful for Men to exercise in this World, and such as it is most difficult for us to attain to, *viz.* a firm Faith and Trust in God, an entire Submission to his Will, Contentedness under the Dispensations of his Providence, Meekness, Patience, Firmness and Constancy of Mind under Provocations and Sufferings, together with a diffusive Charity, even in the midst of Want.

Nay

Nay allowing what we assert, that *Jesus* voluntarily submitted to undergo what he suffered, he became thereby not only a very useful, but also a general Example to all Sorts of Men.

By exemplifying the Virtues requisite to a poor Condition, he became a Pattern to the greatest Part of Mankind, who are placed in a low Condition. And by his voluntary Submission to this State for our sakes, he became as eminent a Pattern to the rich and great Men of the World likewise. See *Phil.* ii. 5, 6, 7, 8. *2 Cor.* viii. 9.

Before I pass to the other general Head, I will answer this Objection, *viz.* Why Christ passed so great a Part of his Life in Silence? To which I reply,

1. If we were not able to assign the just Reasons for this Proceeding, it ought not however to pass for a reasonable Objection in this Case; God might design him for a public Example for what Space of Time he pleased, and that for very wise and good Reasons, which we may not be able to guess at. And although, if we had all his Actions recorded, there would have been more Instances for our Instruction, yet during that Time he exercised his public Ministry, there might be enough to answer these Ends.

2. I add, that from the short Account which the Evangelists have given us of the retired Part of our Saviour's Life, we have Reason to look upon him as a great Example of eminent Virtues. *He went down with Joseph and Mary, and was subject to them*, as *St. Luke* tells us. This was at first View a Life of Innocency and honest Industry, spent in the constant Exercise of Humility and Contentedness, Submission and Resignation to his heavenly Father, and Obedience to his reputed Parent; Virtues all of them necessary for the greater Part of Mankind, and not easily exercised by them. And

if

if we consider the Dignity of his Person, this Part of our Saviour's Life was farther exemplary to us. For what could be a greater Instance of Condescension and Goodness, than for the Son of God to take our Nature upon him, and to accommodate himself to all the Infirmities of innocent Humanity? And how could he more effectually have expressed to us his Contempt of this vain World, than by freely submitting to all those mean Circumstances, with which this Part of his Life was attended?

3. I observe farther, that there were not wanting Instances, which all along discovered him to be an extraordinary Person; and such as were sufficient to prepare Men to acknowledge him, when he should make his public Appearance.

St. *Luke* tells us, the Shepherds made known his Birth. See *Luke* ii. 17, 18. Some *Magi* made so public an Enquiry concerning his Birth, as to create Jealousy in *Herod*, and Trouble to all *Jerusalem*. All which was sufficient to excite the Curiosity of many to enquire after, and to observe this Child, as he grew up.

We are further informed, that when his Mother brought him to *Jerusalem*, to present him to the Lord, *Simeon* and *Anna*, two Persons of good Note, spake of him in very remarkable Terms. See *Luke* ii. 22, &c.

At the Age of twelve Years, he disputed publicly with the Doctors, Ver. 42, &c. And when *Mary* expressed her Concern for his having tarried without their Knowledge, he gave her such an Answer as declared him to be the *Son of God*.

Both before and after this Passage, all that the Evangelist says of him is, that, upon his first going to *Nazareth*, the Child grew and waxed strong in Spirit, filled with Wisdom, and the Grace of God was upon him. And again, upon his Return thither at twelve Years of Age, that he increased in Wisdom

dom and in Stature, and in Favour with God and Man. Both which Expressions signify, that as he grew up, there appeared an eminent Degree of Wisdom and Goodness in him, so as to mark him out as an especial Favourite of God, and to render him admired by Men.

4. It is assigned as a probable Account of our Saviour's forbearing to exercise his public Ministry, till he was thirty Years old, that this was in Correspondence with the Law of *Moses*.

5. As a closer Answer to this Objection, I add, that a sufficient Reason why our Lord did not appear publickly for a longer Space of Time, is this, that the Time of his public Appearance and Ministry was full as long as that untoward Generation could bear it. So that had he appeared sooner, he had been so much the sooner cut off. It was therefore the natural Consequence of the evil Temper of that Generation of Men, which God did not think fit to over-rule, that our Saviour's Example was of no longer standing.

6. To take off this Objection entirely, I add, that the Example which he has left us, was such as abundantly to answer the Design and End of it, as will appear from the other general Head, to which I now proceed.

Secondly, To consider the Manner of our Saviour's Behaviour, or the moral Dispositions and Actions of his Life.

1. His Life was suited to the Condition of human Nature, and therefore fit to be proposed as a Pattern to Mankind. He acted just as it becomes us to do, affecting no Singularities, running into no Extravagances, doing nothing but what is perfectly agreeable to human Nature.

He did not pretend to a Stoical Apathy; but as he had, so he freely discovered, in the Course of his Life, the several innocent Affections and Passions, which

which are in other Men. See *John* xiii. 23. xi. 5. *Luke* x. 21. *John* xi. 33. 35. 36. *Luke* vii. 13. *Luke* xix. 41.

Nay he did not take upon him to be insensible of his own Sufferings: He had very quick and pungent Apprehensions of them beforehand, with a Mixture of all the innocent Passions which are wont to accompany such Actions; by all which, provided he retained a just Constancy of Mind, together with a becoming Resignation, he became so much the fitter Example to us, who are liable to the like Affections.

Nay he was not only subject to the more tender Passions of human Nature, but he thought it not below him to be sometimes angry. See *Mark* iii. 5. *Matt.* xvi. 23.

As a farther Proof of our Saviour's Life being human, 'tis observable, that he had nothing particular in his Way of Living; he eat, drank, and conversed as other sober Men did, talked freely with all Sorts of Men, accepted Invitations from, nay sometimes invited himself to their Houses.

He led indeed a single Life, as most suitable to his high Vocation; but he gave no other Precept to his Disciples, with respect to their chusing that State, but only in those Words, *He that is able to receive this Saying, let him receive it.* And to shew how far he was from censuring a marriage State, he accepted an Invitation to a Marriage, and wrought his first Miracle in favour of the Bridegroom and his Company. To which may be added, the tender Affection he expressed to young Children, *Mark* x. 13.

To conclude this Particular, he did not retire from the World under Pretence of Devotion, but as he withdrew at convenient Times to Prayer, in the Even or at Night, so he commonly spent the Day in doing good to Men.

II. As the Life of our Saviour was human, so it was perfectly innocent and inoffensive.

St. Peter, who well knew, tells us, *he did no Sin*; and St. Paul, that he was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*. His Enemies indeed laid the worst of Crimes to his Charge, representing him as a Blasphemer, a Deceiver, a loose and prophane Man, dangerous to the Government: But all this appears evidently the Result either of gross Ignorance, or perverse Malice, if we consult the Places in the New Testament where he is charged with these Crimes. See *John* v. 36. 39. *Matt.* xii. 3, &c. *Luke* xiii. 15. *Matt.* ix. 13. *Luke* xii. 13, 14. *John* vi. 15. *Luke* xx. 25. *Matt.* xvii. 27. *John* xviii. 36.

And at last, when they were determined to put him to Death, though they *sought false Witnesses*, they could find none that could agree in their Evidence. The High-Priest was able to find nothing to charge him with, but what he owned himself, out of Reverence to the Name of God, by which he was adjur'd, namely, that he was *the Son of God*: As for Pilate his Judge, he in most emphatical Terms declared his Innocency; and when he was prevailed upon against his Conscience to give him up, *He took Water and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person, see ye to it*. And what could have been a fuller Vindication of our Lord than this was?

But it may be objected, that these following Passages in the Gospels seem liable to Objections, viz. our Saviour's allowing and justifying his Disciples in their deviating from an innocent Custom, namely, to *wash their Hands* before eating, and severely rebuking the *Pharisees* upon that Occasion: Likewise his riding in Triumph into *Jerusalem*, and taking Authority upon him, by driving the Money Changers out of the Temple. Farthermore, speak-

ing opprobriously of *Herod*, saying, *Go*, and tell *that Fox*. And lastly, putting his Disciples in Mind of providing Swords a little before his being apprehended: To each of which I shall give an Answer in few Words.

When he allowed his Disciples in their *transgressing the Tradition of the Elders*, *not washing their Hands when they did eat Bread*, 'tis plain, that he did not account that Practice of the *Scribes and Pharisees* to be innocent. They used that Ceremony as if commanded by God; nay, as if it had some moral Goodness in it. And certainly it became him, if he were the *Messiah*, to teach them wherein Purity or Holiness did consist, as likewise to expose the Ignorance and Hypocrisy of those *blind Guides*. We never read, that either he did himself, or allowed his Disciples to transgress any divine Law, rightly understood; so far from that, that he complied with all *human Institutions*, *John x. 22.* that were truly innocent; nay, commanded his Disciples to obey the *Scribes and Pharisees Commands*, as far as they were agreeable to *Moses*.

As to our Lord's riding in a kind of Triumph into *Jerusalem* a little before his Crucifixion, 'tis evident that he then owned himself the *Messiah*, see *Matt. xxi. 1. 2. 4. 5.* tho' he did not pretend to an earthly Kingdom. And when he was come into the City, he exercised his Authority no where but in *his Father's House*, driving out of the Temple those that profaned it, which he must reasonably be understood to have done, as he was the *Son of God*.

As to his styling *Herod, that Fox*, it admits the same Answer. Whosoever is sent with a special Commission from God, is in the Execution of that Commission greater than the greatest Prince upon Earth. And that our Lord in this Instance took upon him to be thus commissioned, is evident from his styling himself a *Prophet*, see *Luke xiii. 31, 32,*

33. and laying Claim to a miraculous Power, and declaring himself appointed to discharge an Office, which he should continue to do, till his appointed Time was come.

As to our Saviour's putting his Disciples upon providing Swords for his Defence, it was only a symbolical Way of speaking, to forewarn them of the Distresses to which they were presently to be exposed; for had he designed to make Use of their Assistance for his Defence, it had not been enough to have had *two Swords*. So that notwithstanding the several Objections above-mentioned, we may justly affirm, that our Saviour's Demeanour was innocent and inoffensive.

III. There was further observable in the Life of our Saviour, perfect Simplicity and Integrity, mixed with exact Prudence.

His Simplicity and Integrity appeared in his free and open conversing with all Sorts of People, without any other Design but in doing Good to their Souls, and Bodies. He instructed his Disciples on all Occasions; and when at any Time they misbehaved themselves, he reproved them, always kindly, but more or less sharp, according to the Occasion. In conversing with his Enemies, he freely rebuked them for their Vices, and told them the Truth in so plain a Manner, that *they sought to kill him*. He often said enough to convince them, that he owned himself the *Messiah*, though he did it in such Terms, as they could not lay hold of, till he had finished his Ministry, and then *being adjured by the High-Priest*, he plainly owned himself the *Christ the Son of God*; and confest to *Pilate*, that he was the *King of the Jews*.

His exact Prudence appeared also in revealing to his Disciples by Degrees that which they could not receive all at once; and at the last left some Things to be revealed to them by the Spirit, after

his Resurrection, because they *could not bear them then*. And for the same Reason he did not put them upon some Exercises, that of *fasting* in particular, not only as being unseasonable whilst *he was with them*, but because they were not prepared for the Severities of Religion.

But more especially our Saviour's great Prudence appeared by his managing himself in such Manner, as that notwithstanding all the Craft and Malice of his Enemies, he did not fall into their Hands, 'till he had *finished the Work which God had given him to do*.

And this may serve as a *third* Instance wherein the Life of our Saviour is an Instruction to us.

IV. In the Life of our Saviour we have an Example of a genuine and substantial Piety.

Thus for Instance, as he ever professed, that he *came from God*, and was *sent by him*; so he constantly acknowledged God in all his Ways, assuming nothing to himself, but as derived from, and depending upon the Father. See *John v. 19, &c. xiv. 10. Luke x. 21, 22.*

He was constant in his Prayers, both public and private; and after he had spent whole Days in Works of Charity, would continue in Prayer the whole Night. See *Matt. xiv. 23. Luke v. 16. Mark i. 35. vi. 46, &c. Luke vi. 12. John xvii.* And in his Agony in the Garden, and during his Suffering on the Cross, he applied himself with the utmost Fervency of Spirit to his Heavenly Father.

He always expressed a very great Regard to whatsoever was any way related to God. His *Word* he ever mentioned with the highest Respect. See *Matt. v. 17, 18.* He cited the *Scriptures* on all Occasions, both for his own Direction, and to confute his Adversaries.

In like Manner he often expressed his Regard to the Temple, as to *God's House*; attended it constantly

ly himself, and rebuked the Profaners of it with great Vehemency. *Matt. xxi. 12, 13.*

All the *Institutions* of God were likewise sacred to him, and as he was *made under the Law*, he submitted to all its Ordinances.

He attended at several Festivals, he eat the Paschover, kept the Sabbath, and he admonished those whom he healed of the Leprosy *to offer the Gifts which Moses commanded.*

He maintained a firm Faith and Trust in God in every Part of his Life, and when dying, he gave still Evidence of it, by calling God *his God* twice in the same Breath. *Matt. xxvii. 46.* and presently after expired with an Expression full of Trust in him, saying, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.*

In Virtue of this Faith he always made the Glory of God his great End. See *John vii. 18. viii. 49, 50. xvii. 1. 4.* He yielded a ready, a diligent, and a constant Obedience to his Will. See *John viii. 29. iv. 34.* And not only by doing, but by submitting in all Cases to the Will of his heavenly Father. See *John xii. 27, 28. Matt. xxvi. 39. John xviii. 11.*

To conclude this Head; our Saviour's Piety appeared in his making it his Business to excite the same Disposition in others.

This was the Design of his publick Preaching, and of his more private Conversation, to instruct Men in the Knowledge of God, and his Will, and to persuade them to a suitable Practice. See *John iv. 10. vi. 27. Luke x. 41, 42. xi. 27. xiv. 3. 7.*

V. There was farther exemplified to us, in the Life of our Saviour, a large and disinterested Charity.

He came into the World to save Sinners; and whilst he was in it his Business was, to do Good. *Matt. ix. 35.*

Moreover,

Moreover, like his heavenly Father, he *did good to the Evil and the Good*. He readily laid hold of every Opportunity of being useful ; nay, he sought Opportunities that he might be so ; he frequently prevented the miserable, and saved them the Trouble of petitioning by kindly offering his Assistance, whenever he beheld a compassionate Object. See *John v. 6, 7.*

Moreover, what Good he did, he did freely ; nay he persevered in doing Good, in spite of all the Provocations he met with to the contrary. He did, as his Gospel hath obliged his Disciples, Good for Evil. See *Matt. xxiii. 37. Luke xxiii. 34. John xv. 13. Rom. v. 6. 8. 10.*

VI. I proceed to consider that spotless Purity in which also our Lord made himself an Example to Men.

There were but few of the Pleasures of Sense which he vouchsafed to partake of, and those also very sparingly ; he was frequently exposed to Hunger, and Thirst, and Weariness, whilst he went about preaching the Gospel. He refused not indeed, when invited, to be present at Entertainments, and sometimes accepted the Respect of being anointed with costly Ointment, but in neither of these Instances was there any Thing justly liable to Censure. He always made the Entertainment an Opportunity of discoursing piously to the Company. In permitting himself to be anointed with Ointment, he allowed in both Instances a Respect to be paid him, which was justly his Due, and in one of them an Occasion to be given for recording the Repentance and Gratitude of a Sinner, as an Example and Encouragement to future Generations. *Luke vii. 37.*

Our Lord did not withdraw from the World, nor use any unnatural Methods for mortifying the Flesh, but he preserved himself innocent and pure

in Ways suitable to the Condition of human Nature, and the Design of this present Life, always keeping his Body in that Subjection to the Spirit, that it might be a ready Instrument in doing, or suffering the Will of God. *Isa. l. 5, 6.*

VII. Our Lord's profound Humility became an Example to us.

Every Instance of his Life, both private and publick, is a Proof of this. *He made himself of no Reputation, by taking upon him the Form of a Servant, being made in the Likeness of Men; so being found in Fashion as a Man, he yet farther humbled himself to the lowest Degree, becoming obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross.*

VIII. Our Lord's great Meekness and Gentleness towards all Sorts of Men, became an Example to us.

This was a natural Effect of his Humility, and therefore he joins his *Meekness* and *Lowliness of Heart*, when he invites Sinners to come to him. He calls himself the *good Shepherd*, because of his tender Care towards such, as should come under his special Conduct, Accordingly he managed his Disciples with great Tenderness and Gentleness.

But his Meekness appeared most eminently in his Carriage towards his Enemies, whilst *he endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself*. When they called him Impostor and Magician, he often condescended to argue the Case with them, giving them unanswerable Arguments, and very mild Words in his own Vindication.

'Tis true, he sometimes upbraided them in a very severe Manner, calling them *Fools and blind, a Generation of Vipers, and Children of the Devil*, which may seem an Objection against his Meekness. But if the Matter be thoroughly considered, this admits of a very fair Account.

Supposing the *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, such Men

the Evangelists represent them, of which there can be no doubt, there's nothing said of them by our Lord, but what was strictly true. Malice and Hypocrisy mix'd together, make the very worst Constitution, that human Nature is capable of. 'Tis true it did not become every private Person to have told them the Truth so openly; and that partly for want of a certain Knowledge of their inward Temper, and partly for want of Authority to rebuke all Sorts of Sinners; but our Saviour who knew the Hearts of Men, and had a Commission from God, might be allowed to tell them their own, especially since he had taken the gentler Course first.

To conclude this Particular, our Saviour's Meekness was then most conspicuous, when he met with the utmost personal Provocations: Witness his calling *Judas, Friend*, when he came to betray him, and his mild Address to the *Chief Priests*, and *Captains*, and *Elders*, when they came to seize him.

IX. The Life of Jesus is a great Example of Patience.

Of which we have undeniable Instances in every Part of his Life; but it appeared most remarkably in quietly sustaining the Insults and Sufferings which befel him, both immediately before and at his Crucifixion, see *Matt. xxvi. 63. John xviii. 23. Matt. xxvii. 26, &c. Acts viii. 32.* Upon the Cross indeed, he once complained; but it was in the Words of a prophetic Psalm, indicted long before, for that very purpose, making his humble Application to *God*, as to one in whom he knew he had sure Interest, notwithstanding the Severity of his Sufferings, in which Confidence he immediately after resign'd his Spirit to him. See *Psal. xxiii. 1. Luke xxiii. 46.*

And that which rendered this Patience of our Lord still the more considerable, was his Conscience

ness of perfect Innocency, and of the Injury done him by his Persecuters. To which Purpose St. Peter argues in this very Case, proposing our Lord as a Pattern to us. 1 *Pet.* ii. 19, &c.

X. The Life of Jesus was an Example of Constancy.

He was neither affected with the Applauses, nor imposed upon by the Pretences, nor discouraged by the Reproaches and Threatenings of those he had to do with. He indeed withdrew upon Occasion from one Place to another, to avoid their Fury; but he never defer'd his Work, or neglected the least Part of his Duty from Fear, but was always imploy'd in the great Business of his high Calling, wheresoever he went. He very often discoursed with his Disciples of his Sufferings; and tho' they would have dissuaded him, he went to *Jerusalem*, tho' he knew the Things that should befall him.

A little before he was seized, he comforted his Disciples with Respect to his Absence from them. When his Discourse was finished, and he had recommended himself to God by Prayer, he went with them to the Garden, and expected the Traytor *Judas*, and when the Officers came, delivered himself unto them.

And when he was brought before the *Chief Priest* and *Council*, and afterwards before *Pilate*, he owned himself with great Constancy to be what he was.

And as the certain Prospect of his Sufferings could not discourage him, so neither did the Feelings them weaken his Resolution.

'Tis true, that both in his Agony in the Garden, and whilst he was upon the Cross, he discovered a very quick Sense of his Sufferings; but this did not proceed from a Want of Courage.

The *Virtue of Courage* cannot consist in the Strength and Vigour of the animal Spirits; nor in an obstinate Resolution not to complain. On the contrary,

contrary, the most excellent Constitution, particularly to the Purposes of Virtue and Piety, is undoubtedly that, which is most tender and sensible; and such a Constitution we may therefore reasonably presume our Saviour's to have been; which, as it would necessarily occasion a very quick Sense of Pain, and the Ignominy he was exposed to, so there was also in his Case a Concurrence of many other Circumstances, whereby this Sense would be heightened. He, who suffered for the Sins of Men, must needs have had a deep Sense of the Displeasure of his heavenly Father, on Account of the Apostacy of Mankind, as also of the heinous Evil of Sin, and all the Misery to which it had exposed the Children of Men. He must have been strongly affected with the Baseness of his Persecutors, and from thence considered the Difficulty of recovering Sinners to God, and the Misery to which a great Part of Mankind would still by their Perverseness expose themselves. He was wise and good enough, possessed with such an ardent Love both to God and Man, as to be deeply touched with such like Apprehensions, which may not perhaps duly affect us, through our Ignorance, Inconsiderateness, and Narrowness of Spirit. And after all, he might have been left by God to feel as much from all these Circumstances concurring, as innocent human Nature is capable of feeling, that by these Means his Sufferings might be more valuable to the Ends they were designed.

To conclude this Particular, as from the Beginning of his Sufferings to the End, he uttered nothing unbecoming his Character, so while he hung on the Cross, he said diverse Things which shew'd both the Clearness of his Apprehension, and the Firmness of his Mind. He expressed a tender Regard for his Mother, committing her to the Care of his beloved Disciple; he kindly apologized and pray'd

pray'd for his Enemies ; he comforted the penitent Malefactor, and when he knew all Things were accomplished, saving one Prophecy, of their giving him Vinegar to drink, he gave an Occasion for offering it, and when he had received it, he declared, that *it was finished*, and commending his Spirit to God, he bowed his Head, and died.

Thirdly, The next Difficulty which fallen Men are under is this, that they find themselves indisposed, and unable to comply with the Divine Will, even when it is fully and clearly revealed to them.

Now what Provision our *Mediator* hath made in this Case, I shall shew in these three following Particulars.

I. Our Saviour hath provided in this Instance, by annexing such Sanctions to his Precepts, as do most powerfully influence our Minds.

II. By promising the Assistance of the Divine Spirit, for the enabling us to do what of ourselves we cannot.

III. By settling such Institutions to be used in his Church, as are naturally proper to excite us, and are moreover designed as Means of conveying the Grace of the Holy Spirit to us.

I. By annexing such Sanctions to his Precepts, as do naturally tend to influence our Minds.

The Precepts of Christianity are all of them so good, and reasonable, that every Man would comply with them, were it not for the seeming Pleasures of Sin, and the Difficulties which seem to attend some religious Duties ; *seem*, I say, for after all, the Experience of every good Christian fully satisfies him, that the present Pleasures of a religious Life, greatly preponderates all its Difficulties ; as the Remorse arising from Sin on the other Hand, renders its Pleasures very inconsiderable. Yet nevertheless Men are generally misled by a present Pleasure,

Pleasure, which they feel in complying with their sensual Inclinations ; and that the Practice of Virtue becomes difficult and irksome to them, because it thwarts such Inclinations. Now to balance this, our Lord has proposed, over and above the present Pleasure which a Compliance with his Law creates, future Rewards for our Obedience, and future Punishments for our Disobedience, which to those who thoroughly consider them, will appear to outweigh all the present Pleasures of Sin, or the present Difficulties of Religion by which Men are apt to be discouraged. For on the one hand is promised all that Happiness, which human Nature compleated by the Union of a purified Soul with an incorruptible Body, and restored to the Favour of God is capable of ; and on the other hand, all that Misery that Men composed of Soul and Body reunited, but abandoned by God are liable to. And the Gospel has clearly asserted the Reality of these future Recompences, beyond all doubt.

And herein it must be granted, that the Method taken by the Christian Institution to excite our Hope, and Fear, and by Consequence for moving us effectually to comply with its Precepts, altogether surpasses what has been done by any other Institution of Religion.

There are indeed abundance of Men professing themselves Christians, who are yet as unreformed as the worst of Infidels ; but then 'tis because they do not at all consider the Principles of Christianity. But as this is certain, that where Christianity is professed, there are far greater Numbers of all Ranks of Men who are pious, than there are in other Parts of the World ; so 'tis as evident that this is in great Measure owing to the Belief of a future Life, which keeps bad Men in the Christian World, from being much worse than they are. And 'tis that which good Christians are forced often to have Recourse to,

to, in order to the Strengthening their good Resolutions, and fortifying themselves against the Temptations they meet with. By all which we may perceive the Usefulness, and even Necessity of these Motives, which the Gospel hath offered to our Consideration.

But this is not all, for,

II. Our Lord hath made farther Provision against the Indisposition and Inability of Men, by promising the Assistance of the divine Spirit, for the enabling us to do what of ourselves we cannot.

Mankind being become after the Fall not only mutable, and fallible, but also very much disordered and weakened in all their Faculties, having contracted an Indisposition to that which is good, together with strong Habits of Sin. It is the great Design of Christianity, by the extraordinary Influences of the holy Spirit, to reduce the Soul into good Order, and to preserve it when so produced.

'Tis true, good Men in all Ages, such I mean as have had a becoming Sense of God, and of natural Religion, have professed their Reliance upon God, and their Hopes of his Assistance, and I question not, but they have in some Measure partaken of what they thus hoped for ; which was in Truth, but not clearly understood by them, the Effect of God's Mercy and Grace thro' Jesus Christ, whose Undertaking, as we Christians believe, had its Effect for the Benefit of Mankind, ever since the first Promise made to *Adam* after his Fall. But as the greater Part of Men were left to the Suggestions of Nature, and the Conjectures of Reason in this Case, having no express Declarations or Promise, so the good Men among the *Jews* themselves, who enjoy'd the divine Oracles, yet believed and hoped for the Assistance of the divine Spirit, rather upon the Grounds of natural Religion, than of their own Law, the Promises of which were chiefly temporal.

The Prophets indeed uttered many Predictions of a plentiful Effusion of the divine Spirit. But this was to be in the Days of the Messiah, see *Isa.* xl. 3. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27. *Joel* ii. 28. which accordingly came to pass, in an extraordinary Manner. And we have moreover express Promises of the Communication of the same Spirit to assist the Minds of Christians in every succeeding Age.

Our Lord tells us, that God would *give his holy Spirit* to them *that ask it*, and our Saviour has promised the divine Spirit to all such as shall come to him and believe in him. See *John* vii. 37, 38, 39. And,

On the Day of *Pentecost*, this Spirit was given in a wonderful Manner, as a Pledge of his being thenceforward to direct, and assist the Church of Christ in all succeeding Ages; a Promise for that Purpose being given to all the Members of the Christian Body. See *Acts* ii. 38, 39. *Rom.* viii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And this certainly is a sufficient Provision against the Indisposition and Inability of Men's Minds to comply with the divine Will, when revealed to them; for the same Spirit which dwelt in our Lord without Measure, can form us by Degrees after his Likeness, and make us in our Measure to resemble him, both in our Tempers and Practices.

If it be objected, that we want Instances amongst the Professors of Christianity to verify this Doctrine, I answer, the primitive Times of Christianity abounded with Instances of this Kind: And such, thanks be to God there have been and are to be met with in every Age. And we might all of us be Instances of this Kind, to the Honour of our Profession, if we would diligently use the Means appointed for the attaining this divine Spirit, and faithfully improve all his Motions upon our Minds: Which brings me to shew,

III. That

III. That our Lord hath made farther Provision in this Case, by settling such Institutions to be used in his Church, as are naturally proper to excite us, and are moreover designed as Means of conveying the Grace of the holy Spirit to us.

Thus he ordered the Apostles and their Successors to receive into the Number of his Disciples, all such as should profess their Repentance and Faith in him, by the external Rite of Washing them with Water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

He hath farther ordained, that all his Disciples thus initiated, shall not only perform Acts of Christian Devotion by themselves, but moreover, that on the first Day of every Week, his Disciples should worship God in public, and on other solemn Occasions ; and that then his Word should be read and preached among them, in order to improve their Understandings, awaken their Consciences, and cause them to remember and consider the great Truths, which they profess to believe.

He hath farther appointed, that in these solemn Assemblies, they shall frequently commemorate the great Sacrifice which he made of himself upon the Cross ; thereby not only professing themselves all Members of the same Body, but at the same Time also representing to God, to themselves, and to one another, the infinite Love of God to Sinners, thro' a *Mediator*, and solemnly engaging themselves afresh to continue the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*.

All which Institutions naturally tend to engage the Thoughts of those that use them, and thereby to render both the *Precepts* and the *Example*, and the Motives of the Gospel useful to the Ends for which they were designed.

Nay they are moreover appointed by our Lord as Means of deriving and conveying the Grace of his holy Spirit to our Souls.

Thus

Thus when our Lord commissioned his Apostles to make Disciples out of all Nations. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. He immediately subjoins, and lo, I am with you always unto the End of the World; which can import no less, than his assisting them and their Successors, in the faithful Discharge of their Duty.

As to the Sacrament of Baptism, we receive by it Remission of Sins, and the Gift of the holy Ghost. See Acts ii. 38, 39.

And so likewise as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it is not only intended to commemorate Christ's Death; but 'tis a Communion or Participation of all the Benefits, purchased by breaking the Body, and shedding the Blood of Christ, of which a principal one is, the Grace of the divine Spirit to strengthen our Souls.

And no other Institution of Religion hath afforded the like Means. The Jews indeed abounded in external Ordinances, but they were not attended with that Promise of internal Grace and Assistance, which is annexed to the Christian Institutions. See Heb. viii. 5. 6. 10.

Every other Profession of Religion had likewise its external Rites and Ordinances belonging to it; but the Christian Institutions are much more rational, decent, and easy, and better adapted to the Ends for which they were design'd, than those of any other Religion, and consequently in this Instance also our Lord has made the best Provision for us.

There remains yet one farther Difficulty which fallen Men lay under, which I am to consider in the last Place, and to shew that our Lord hath in that Instance likewise made due Provision for us, viz.

Fourthly, An Incapacity of removing those other evil Consequences, to which their Sins had exposed them; and of obtaining for themselves that compleat Salvation, which they stood in need of.

The remaining Consequences of our Apostacy from God are all the Calamities of this present Life, concluded at last with a Separation of Soul and Body by Death, and followed in a future State with all those Evils to which an immortal Soul separated from its Body is there liable.

That Men were of themselves altogether unable either to avoid these, or to deliver themselves from them, is evident; much less are they able to obtain for themselves that Salvation, which will compleat their Happiness. All that is done for us in this Life, even by our Saviour himself, is, that we are by him put into a State of Salvation; but we cannot be said to *be saved*, till every evil Disposition be perfectly rooted out of our Souls, till all the Habits of Virtue and Piety are confirmed in them; nor indeed till our Bodies shall be raised again and united to our Souls.

For altho' the wisest Philosophers and the best of Christians have justly complained of these Bodies of Flesh, as Clogs to their Souls, and have desired to be delivered from them; yet the natural Abhorrence which all Men have of Death, and that ardent Desire of Life, seem to intimate, that we cannot be compleatly happy, without Soul and Body are united. And the Gospel confirms this Notion to us, by causing us to wait for our compleat Salvation, till the Resurrection of the Body. See *Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. v. 4.*

Now 'tis evident, that we can do nothing of all this ourselves, and that no Religion besides the *Christian* hath discovered to us, how it shall be done for us. Which hath assured us, that as our Lord died to make Expiation for our Sins, so he rose again from the Dead; and that according to his Promise he will come again to perfect the great Work he hath undertaken, and which he hath been carrying on by all the Methods I have hitherto mentioned. Here

Here we have a plain Account how we shall be delivered from all the remaining evil Consequences of our Fall, and be made happy to the utmost of our Desires.

For hereby we are assured, that we have now a powerful Friend in Heaven in our own Nature; and one who hath such an Interest in the Father of all, that by him we may go freely to the Throne of Grace; who, although he doth not think fit to deliver us at present from all the Calamities of this Life, yet will cause all Things to work together for our Good. Who although he permits us to remain liable to Death, as the just Reward of our Transgressions, yet being Lord both of the Dead and Living, will receive our Souls at the Hour of Death, and take Care of them during their State of Separation, reviving them with his Influences, and filling them with the comfortable Expectation of their more compleat Happiness. Finally, he will come again in Person, redeem their dead Bodies, and perfect their Souls, reuniting them, and fully instating them in the Favour of God, and bestowing upon them the Inheritance of Children. Of all which he hath given them at present his Spirit, as the sure Pledge and Earnest.

Thus I have finished what I at first proposed, with Respect to the intrinsic Evidence of Christianity, shewing its Credibility, from considering the Persons whom Jesus Christ came to save; the Nature of the Salvation which he proposeth; and the Method in which he hath procured it.

THE
Imperfect PROMULGATION
OF THE
G O S P E L
C O N S I D E R E D.

THE Design of *Jesus's* coming being to save not any particular Race of Men, but the whole Race of Mankind without Exception; it has been thought strange by some, that four thousand Years should be run out, before he came; and that since his appearing, so small a Part of the World should be blessed with the Knowledge of what he hath done for them, or of what he offered to them. To which I answer,

First, That if we could give no tolerable Account of the Matter, yet we ought not to be surprized at it; for we are not able to Account for the Methods of God's Providence in many other Instances, we cannot see from the Beginning to the End of God's Ways; and therefore ought to suspend our Judgments till the winding up of Things, see *Job* xi. 7, 8, 9. *Psal.* cxlv. 5. *Rom.* xi. 33, 34. which will further appear if we consider,

Secondly, That we ourselves may discern several Particulars, in which we are ignorant, which yet ought to be known by us, if we would fully Account for the Difficulty before us. As,

First, We ought to know whether those to whom

the Gospel is not published during this Life, shall ever hear of it in any future State?

Secondly, What Measures God will take at the last Day with those to whom the Gospel was not published.

First, No Man knows whether those who never heard of the Gospel in this Life, may not in some future State have it published to them.

Some have thought that those *Pagans* who approved themselves honest Men, shall have in a future State the Gospel preached to them. (See *Staynoe Salvation by Christ alone.*)

Now tho' I will neither affirm or deny either of these Opinions probable, yet I will venture to say, that it is difficult for any Man to say, that they may not be true; and yet if either of them should prove true, the Difficulty would be solved. And thus much we may infer from these Conjectures, that if contemplative Men can think of some such Ways of solving this Difficulty, there may be more Ways of doing it known to the divine Mind.

But yet farther, no Man certainly knows what Measures God will take at the last Day with those who have lived and died unacquainted with the Gospel; for the Gospel has not revealed it to us. But,

Thirdly, We may ourselves discern very much of the Reasonableness of that Method which Providence hath taken, both as to the *Time* of *Jesus* his coming into the World, and the *Way* in which he ordered his Gospel to be published.

Almighty God having made Men reasonable Creatures, hath all along dealt with them as such, and hath used such Methods as might reasonably promote, though not necessitate their Recovery.

Thus in the first Ages of the World there was a plain and certain Tradition both of his first forming Man, of the Law he gave to our first Parents, of
A a 3 their

358 *The imperfect Promulgation*

their Fall, and of the kind Intimations of the divine Compassion towards them after their Fall, which were sufficient to instruct and reclaim the sinful Race of *Adam*. And accordingly *Enoch* and *Noah*, and others, were recovered from their fallen State to that Degree, as to become acceptable to God themselves, and Instructors and Examples to others. See *Gen. v. 24. Jude xiv. 15. Gen. vi. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 5.* And besides these external Means of Instruction, 'tis intimated, *Gen. vi. 3.* that God's Spirit also was all that while striving with Man.

Indeed when none of these Means prevailed to reform them, God destroy'd the World, excepting *Noah* and his Family.

When by this Means there was a new Beginning of Mankind, *Noah* was able to convey to his Offspring a certain Tradition both of what he had derived from *Adam*, and of what he had learned of God since, and to give them an Account of the Reason of the Deluge; which one would have thought enough to have secured his Race in the Practice of Virtue.

But when they also degenerated, God chose *Abraham*, and instructed him and his Family; and appointed them to be his peculiar People, that he might preserve one Nation at least from the general Contagion of Idolatry.

Among them God raised up a great Lawgiver, and a Succession of Prophets, discovering by Degrees his kind Intentions towards them and all the World, and promising in due Time to raise up of the Seed of *Abraham*, one who should be the Saviour of the World.

When the Fulness of Time was come, that is, when all other proper Methods had proved ineffectual. When he was become the Desire and Expectation of all Nations; and when by the Conquest of the *Romans* the World was more civilized, and an Inter-course between many Nations established, and a

Way

Way thereby made for the more easy Promulgation of the Gospel, God sent forth this great Person into the World, whom he stiles *his beloved Son*. And certainly this was the fittest Time for his Appearance.

If we farther consider, in what Manner our Lord appointed his Gospel to be published, we shall still perceive more of the Fitness of that Method which Providence has used in this Case.

When our Lord commissioned his Apostles, it was to *make Disciples out of all Nations*, &c. See *Matt. xxviii. 19*. And his Doctrine was well suited to this End. It was rational and proper to be received by every Nation, being adapted to the Condition of all Mankind.

And that the Apostles might have the better Success, God bestowed upon them the Gift of speaking whatsoever Language should be necessary for propagating the Christian Doctrine, and also a Power of working other Miracles to move their Auditors, and to convince their Judgments.

And such indeed was the Fidelity and Industry of the Apostles and their Successors, and so conformable their Lives to their Doctrine, that Christianity had incredible Success in those early Times; and if the Christians of the following Ages had continued to recommend their Profession by the Exemplariness of their Lives, and had retained that Zeal for propagating it in the World, it had been before this the established Religion of Mankind. But,

Fourthly, God may in Justice permit, for what we know, some Parts of the Earth to be ignorant of the Christian Revelation; either because when the Gospel was first preached to some Nations, they rejected it; or because they were so wholly indisposed to receive it, that the preaching of it to them would have only aggravated their Condemnation. And these possibly might be the Reasons why Saint

360 *The imperfect Promulgation*

Paul and Silas were forbidden of the holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. See Acts xvi. 6. 7. 9. 10.

This is very agreeable to the Directions *Jesus* gave his Apostles when he sent them to preach. *Matt. x. 11. 14.*

'Tis consonant also to our Saviour's Declaration, that *whosoever bath, to him shall be given; and from him that bath not, shall be taken away even that which he bath.* Which is the Reason he assigns why he spake to the Multitude in Parables. *Matt. xiii. 13.*

'Tis certain, that this may be assigned as a Reason, why the Light of the Gospel is departed from diverse Places, that it was not duly improved by them. *Rev. ii. 4, 5.*

Fifthly, The Efficacy of our Lord's Undertaking doth certainly extend much further than the actual Knowledge of him doth.

Thus the Children of Christian Parents baptized are capable of Salvation by *Jesus Christ*, without actually knowing him.

Thus all the good Men among the *Jews*, who did not see the Promise of a *Messiah* fulfilled, could not actually know him, as we do.

Sixthly, The holy Scriptures do every where represent our Saviour, as having made Expiation for the Sins of all Mankind, as well those who were born before his Appearing, as since; and those who live in the remotest and darkest Corners of the Earth, as those to whom the Gospel is published. See *1 John ii. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. Rom. v. 15, &c. Heb. ii. 9. Heb. ix. 25, 26.*

Seventhly, By Means hereof God was so far reconciled to Men, as to give Place for Repentance, and to accept of it, wheresoever it was sincere.

In the first Covenant made with *Adam*, there was no Allowance made of Repentance after Transgression; but by the Interposition of our Redeemer, Sinners were allowed and encouraged to repent and

turn

turn to God in hopes of obtaining Favour. The respiting our first Parents from the Execution of the Sentence denounced, was an Intimation that Repentance would be acceptable to God: The Promise made after the Fall was a Confirmation of the same Thing. The *Goodness* of God exercised towards all Mankind in so many Instances, naturally tended to lead them to Repentance. All along in the New Testament, Repentance is inculcated and encouraged. See *Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Jonab*, in Relation to *Nineveh*. When Jesus declared the Will of God, it was in these Terms, *That Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations*. And tho' this Doctrine is preached only to those to whom the Oracles of God are published; yet true Penitents will always be accepted of God. See *Acts x. 34, 35*.

'Tis true, sometimes Faith is made the Condition of Acceptance with God, as well as Repentance, but then if by Faith be understood an express believing in Jesus Christ, it must be restrained to them to whom he is preached.

Eighthly, Another Effect of the Expiation made by Jesus, may have been, for ought we can know to the contrary, the secret Operation of the divine Spirit, enlightening and moving the Minds of Men in all Parts of the World.

'Tis owned, that no Man can either repent or believe in God, or obey him acceptably, without the Assistance of the good Spirit; and that this Assistance is expressly promised through *Jesus Christ*. But there can be no doubt but the Patriarchs and other good Men among the *Jews*, as also *Job* and others among the Heathens were enlightened and moved by this Spirit. And it seems worthy of God to believe thus, at least not to believe otherwise.

And indeed, the ancient Christians looked upon our Saviour, as not only designing, but beginning his

362 *The imperfect Promulgation, &c.*

his Transactions for the Good of Men from the Beginning of the Creation ; they believed it was he who appeared in an angelical Form in the Old Testament. They believed it was he, who conducted the *Israelites* out of *Egypt* ; that it was he who was in the Tabernacle, and in the Cloud, towards whom therefore the *Jews* paid their Adorations : And that it was he who inspired great and good Men of all Nations : So that although he did not appear in human Form till 4000 Years were elapsed, yet he did not neglect Mankind all that Space of Time, nor doth at present neglect those who have not heard of his Incarnation ; but is every where using those divine Methods, which seem meet for training up well-disposed Minds, which do not resist the Grace which he offers to them.

Nintbly, At the great Day of Judgment all Men shall be accountable to our Lord, with due Regard had to their respective Advantages or Disadvantages in this their State of Trial. See *Luke* xii. 48. *Matt.* xxv. 14, &c. *Rom.* ii. 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14.

'Tis very true, that the Salvation of the Gospel is by the Gospel promised only to those who believe and obey the Gospel. And we are not so plainly told what Kind and Degrees of Rewards and Punishments God will dispense to others ; but we are in general assured, that the Recompence of that Day shall be just, and bear some Proportion to the different Circumstances and Conditions of Men.

So that the whole of the Matter at last comes to this Issue. Some Men have, by hearing the Gospel preached to them, far greater Advantages, than others ; but then they are accountable likewise for those special Advantages : Whereas such as not through their own Default, but by the meer Providence of God, want those Advantages, shall be answerable for no more, than what they have been intrusted with.

T H E

Bishop *BLACKHALL*'s

SUFFICIENCY

OF A

Standing Revelation,

A B R I D G ' D.

ELPH BLACKHALLS

SUPREMACY

Standing Revelation

A R I B O D

S

S

I

flame

II.

Faith

III

desce

by w

ble fe

would

I.

velati

ment

If

to eff

I.

ent.

2.

To th

I a

well

If

I.

and c

comm

THE SUFFICIENCY

OF A

Standing Revelation.

I N discoursing upon this Subject, I will endeavour,

I. To shew that the present *standing Revelation* of God's Will in the *Old and New Testament* is *sufficient* to persuade Men.

II. I shall shew, that having such Grounds of Faith, it is an *unreasonable Request* to desire more.

III. I shall shew, that in Case God should condescend to gratify Men in this unreasonable Desire, by working new Miracles daily, 'tis highly probable few or none of those who do not now believe, would be persuaded by this Means.

I. I shall endeavour to shew, that the *present Revelation* of God's Will in the *Old and New Testament* is *sufficient* to persuade Men to Repentance.

If the present Revelation be thought *insufficient* to effect this, it must be either,

1. Because no *standing Revelation* can be sufficient. Or,

2. Because our Revelation has some Defects in it. To the first,

I answer, that a *standing Revelation* may be so well attested, as to be *sufficient* to persuade Men.

If not, it must be either,

1. Because all Matters necessary to be known and done by Men at all Times cannot at once be committed to *Writing*. Or,

2. Be-

2. Because there cannot be *sufficient Evidence* given to satisfy a rational Man, that any Writing said to be of divine Authority, is so. To the first,

I answer that though it may be granted to be impossible for a Man at *once* to commit to *Writing* all Matters necessary to be known and done by all Men at all Times, yet it is not impossible to a Being of infinite Wisdom and Knowledge to contrive a Revelation, that no Addition need ever to be made to it.

And that a *standing Revelation* should be so contrived, is not very hard to be conceived.

For Truth is finite, and a Revelation of all necessary Truth being once made, there is nothing more required, but a right Understanding of the Truths already delivered, and a right Use of Reason in making Inferences therefrom.

A *standing Revelation* may also be *sufficient* for ever to direct Men in all Points of *Practice*. For a Rule once given, is a perpetual Direction both what to *do*, and what to avoid; as well in new Instances of Wickedness, as those that were practised before the Rule was made.

And the Necessity that human Law-givers find themselves under to be every Day repealing former Laws, and adding new ones, is not from an absolute Impossibility of making at once such a Body of Laws as might be sufficient for all after Times; but arises partly from the *Nature* of human Laws, which are mostly *negative* and *prohibitive* only; partly from the *Nature* of that Obedience, which is to the *Letter* of the Law; partly from the *little* Regard of *Posterity*, which makes Men only consult their own Peace; partly from the *Ignorance* of the wisest Men; and partly from the unexpected Difficulty of putting a Law in Execution.

But none of these Reasons make it necessary that
God

God should be every Day making new Declarations of his Will. For the Laws of God are *positive* and *commanding*; and the *Obedience* we owe to them is the *Obedience* of the *Heart*. And God being *King for ever and ever*, has the same Relation to all Men in *all Ages*. And he also *understanding* fully the Tempers of all his Subjects, knows beforehand what Effects his Laws will have, and so need never repeal, or alter any of them. And lastly, having *all Power*, can punish the Transgressions of his Laws, as he pleases.

Thus, I think it appears, that all Matters necessary to be known and done by Men at all Times, may be at *once* committed to *Writing*. But,

2. It may be objected, that there cannot be *sufficient Evidence* given to satisfy a rational Man; that any such *Writing* said to be of divine Authority, is indeed so. And that,

1. Because nothing but being an *Eye-witness* could assure us that any Book was written by the Person, who is said to be the Author of it.

2. Because we cannot be *assured* that the Author of such a Book did not design to *impose* upon us. And

3. Because no Man can be *sure* that he is not deceived in his Opinion of a Revelation made to him.

1. It may be said, that nothing but being an *Eye-witness* could assure us that any Book was written by the Person who is said to be the Author of it.

But if nothing but being an *Eye-witness* be a *sufficient Reason* that a Book was written by such a Person, the World has been very credulous in receiving such a Number of Books as written by such Authors without sufficient Authority.

We never doubt, but that the Person said to be the Author of such a Book, is indeed so, unless there be some very clear Reason, that shews he could not be the Author of it. And

And when once a Book is generally received as written by such a Person in that Age, in which it was first published, they that live after, never think it reasonable to question the Authority thereof, unless it can be clearly made out, that the Book cannot be of such Antiquity, or could not be the Writing of the reputed Author.

Upon such Reasons Books are every Day received, as written by such and such Authors. And for a Man to receive a Book as written by another Person, and not to receive a Book written by a Prophet, when he has the same Reason to receive one as the other, is not *Judgment*, but *partiality*.

2. It was said, that tho' we might be assured of the Author of such a Book, we cannot be assured, that the Author did not design to *impose upon his Readers*.

To which I answer, that if the Thing published be credible in itself.

If the Author be a credible Person, and gives the best Proofs of his Veracity in that particular, there is *sufficient Reason* to give Credit to it. But,

1. The *Matter* of divine Revelation is credible, because 'tis useful for Men to know, and what they could not have known so fully any other Way as by *Revelation*; and therefore it is not unlikely that the *Goodness* of God should impart to Men by a special Revelation such Things.

And 'tis certainly *credible*, that he who has given us a *Tongue* to utter our Thoughts to one another, should have *Power* to express his own Mind so, as a Man might understand him.

And 'tis likewise *credible*, that God in declaring his Will to Mankind, should make Use of the *Ministry* of a *Man* to declare it to others.

If therefore there be any Thing incredible in the Report of a divine Revelation, it must be in the *special Matter* of it.

But

But tho' the particular Matter could not be known by natural Reason, yet if it be not *contradictory* to *natural Reason*, or a *former Revelation*; and if it be a Doctrine *worthy* of God, there can be no just Objection made from the *Matter* of it. But,

2. The *Credibility* of any Report depends greatly upon the *Credit* of its *Autor*.

And then a Man may reasonably be thought an *Autor* or *Witness* of good *Credit*, when he appears by all his Words and Actions to be sober; and of *unblemished Reputation*, no *designing Person*; and lastly, when he has no worldly Interest to serve by giving such Testimony. But,

3. Even such a Report made by such a Person, is further *credible*, in Case he gives the best Proofs of his *Veracity* in *that particular*.

And 'tis one good *Token* of a Man's firm *Persuasion* of the Truth of what he says, if he appears at that Time to have a good *Sense* of *Religion* upon his Mind.

Again: It is a further *Token* of a Man's firm *Belief* of what he affirms, if he himself *lives* and *acts* agreeably to the Matter of his Report; and especially if in the Consequence thereof, he *declines* making such Profit as he might otherwise make; and denies himself such *Pleasures*, and undertakes such Labours, as it can hardly be supposed any Man of another *Persuasion* would undergo.

But the surest *Token* that any Man can give of his *Veracity*, is persisting in this Evidence he has once given to the last, when neither Promises of Wealth, nor the Fears of Death itself can force him to go back from what he has said.

Such Assurance of this we may have of the *Honesty* and *Veracity* of a Person that witnesses a Thing only of his own private Knowledge.

But *Secondly*, in Case the Author of any Book relates a Thing that was done or spoken before others

besides himself, this is a greater Assurance of the Truth of it; and if after the Report is published, especially if it be a Matter of great Consequence, if it be not *contradicted* by any of those that were present; and if they all *agree* in the same Thing, and are Persons of *good Character*; such Evidence is beyond all Exception. But,

3. It was further objected, that this Author could not be sure that he himself was not deceived in his Opinion of his own Inspiration, or of a Revelation made to himself.

To which I answer, That if God cannot reveal his Will to any Man so, as that the Prophet himself can be assured that it is a divine Revelation, this is to suppose God to have less Power than a Man, who can reveal his Will to another. But if they allow that God could *now* speak, or reveal his Will, as that we could not possibly have any doubt of it; then he might in as plain a Manner speak to Men in former Times.

But many, it is said, have *pretended* to *Revelations*, and have thought themselves inspired, when the Matter of the Revelation has evidenced the Falsity of their Pretence. But what then? Does it follow, because some Persons of *weak Brains* have thought they have had Revelations, that therefore no *sober* Man can ever be sure of a Revelation.

But suppose a Man at first, through Surprise, should not be certain of the Reality of the Revelation, yet certainly the same Signs which are *sufficient* afterwards to satisfy other Men of the Truth of his Revelation, must be allowed to be sufficient to satisfy himself of the same Thing.

From all which it appears, that the *Witness* of a plain *Matter of Fact* may be *sure* of the Truth of what he witnesses; and that 'tis *possible* for God to speak so plainly to Men, that they may be certain they have had a divine Revelation; and that such Evidence

Evidence may be given of the *Veracity* of an *Author*, and of the *Authority* of a *Book*, as is *sufficient* to satisfy a reasonable Man.

And by this, and what I have said before, I hope I have made it appear, that a standing Revelation of God's Will may be so well attested as to be *sufficient* to persuade Men.

I proceed now in the second Place,

2. To consider, whether the holy Scriptures be such a Revelation ; or whether there be Defects in it, which render it not sufficient for that Purpose.

The *Defects* in the *holy Scriptures* must either be in the *Matter*, or the *Proof* of them.

If in the *Matter*, it must be either that it does not give us *sufficient Directions* what to do :

Or does not propose sufficient Motives to persuade Men.

But I shall,

1. Shew that the *holy Scripture* gives us *sufficient Directions* what to do.

2. That its *Motives* are *sufficient* to persuade Men to do what it requires. And

3. That we have sufficient Reason given us to convince us of the *Truth*, *Authority*, and *Doctrines* of the *holy Scripture*.

1. I shall shew, that the *holy Scripture* gives us *sufficient Directions* what to do.

And of this there can be little doubt among those that believe the Authority of it. Because to them its own Testimony of its own *Sufficiency* is a Proof thereof beyond all Exception ; for if, as the Apostle says, it be *profitable for Doctrine, and for Reproof, and for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness*, and it be *able to make us wise unto Salvation*, it is profitable for all the Purposes for which we can desire a divine Revelation.

But Infidels object, that as there were other Books, which are now lost, that were written by

the *Apostles* and other *inspired Men*, and consequently by *divine Inspiration*; either these were needless, when written, or else the Loss of these Books is a Loss to Religion: And we cannot be well assured, that those which we have now remaining do sufficiently instruct us in all Points of Christian *Faith* and *Practice*.

But admitting that there were more Books written by the *Apostles* than are now extant, there is no Reason to infer from thence, that those that are lost were needless, or that those which we now have are *not sufficient*. But rather it may reasonably be presumed, that there was nothing more for Substance in those Books which are supposed to be *lost*, than in those that are now extant. And for this Reason, because the Gospels that are now extant were designed as Compendiums of the whole Christian Institution, and therefore must contain every thing material. And also that if there be a God and a Providence, and if there be any *Truth* in the Scripture Declarations of the *Love* of God to *Mankind*, and that he would have all Men to be *saved*, and come to the *Knowledge of the Truth*, most certainly the necessary Means of Men's Salvation is a proper Subject of the divine Care: And if so, it cannot be thought, but that the same good Providence which, as is now supposed, took Care for the writing of *more Books*, when the Necessities of the Church required *more*, has likewise taken Care for the *Preservation* of *so many* of these Books as are *now sufficient*.

Or if these Men will not allow such a particular Providence, yet if they will but own, that all Things necessary to our Salvation, not knowable by Reason, are taught in the *Books of holy Scripture* we now have, because there are no *other Books* extant, which we have Reason to receive as a divine Revelation.

Or

Or if they deny this, it will lie upon them to produce those *other Books*, and to give good Evidence of their divine Authority ; or if they will shew that there is as *good Reason* to receive *them* as these, we will receive them.

Having shewed that the *holy Scripture* gives us *sufficient Direction* what to do. I proceed,

2. To shew that the *Motives* which the *Scripture* proposes are *sufficient* to *persuade* us to do what it requires.

To all those that believe and obey the Gospel, is promised the most perfect and compleatest Happiness both of Soul and Body. *Matt. xxv. 46.*

To those who are Unbelievers, and obey not the Word, the extreamest Misery. *Matt. xviii. 8. Jude 13. Rev. xx. 20.*

And that our Hopes might be raised, and our Fears excited to the highest Pitch, we are informed there will be no End, either of the one or the other. So far therefore as Hopes and Fears can work upon us, there is plainly nothing wanting in that standing Revelation that God has given us, if they will but credit it.

But perhaps the Infidels will say they do not want a better *Rule*, or *better Motives*, to lead their Lives according to it, than the *Scripture* proposes ; but what they chiefly want, is some *better Evidence* of the Truth of the *Scripture*.

I proceed therefore,

3. To shew, that we have *sufficient Reason* to convince us of the *Truth, Authority, and Doctrines* of the *holy Scripture* ; which I suppose will be granted, if we can shew,

1. That we have *sufficient Reason* to believe that the Books of the holy Scripture, by which I mean the *New Testament*, were written by those *Persons* who are said to be the *Authors* thereof.

2. That there is *sufficient Reason* to give a full

Credit to them in their Relation of Matters of Fact.
And,

3. If the Matters of Fact recorded in the Scripture are true, they are sufficient Proofs of the Truth of it.

1. Then, I am to shew that we have sufficient Reason to believe that the *Books of holy Scripture* were written by those Persons that are said to be the Authors thereof.

Of which we have a better Proof than can be produced for the Authority of any other Books of the like Antiquity.

For that *these* are the *genuine* Books of the Authors to whom they are ascribed, we have the Testimony of all Christians of all Ages; and it is not reasonable, nor credible, to suppose they should all agree to put a Cheat upon *Posterity*.

And we do not find that they were ever excepted against as *spurious* in *those Times* when they were first published, in which it would have been most proper to have made the Exception, or by *those Persons*, viz. the *Jews* and *Heathens*, who neither of them wanted Malice, and whose Interest it would have been to have proved them *spurious*. And 'tis a Satisfaction to us that *they* never argued against the *Christian Religion* from this Topic: Nay *Julian*, the most bitter Enemy of *Christianity*, confessed the Books received by the Christians, were *genuine*.

Indeed we cannot demonstrate that the *Books of the New Testament* were written by the Apostles, because the Matter itself is not capable of such Demonstration. But there is no Argument by which it is, or can be proved, that any ancient Book was written by the Person who is said to be the Author of it, which does not prove the Authority of *these Books*, more strongly than the Authority of any other. And there is no Argument that is urged against *these*, that does not more strongly disprove the

the Authority of any other Book of the like Antiquity.

But granting that the *Authors* of some of the *Books* of the *New Testament* are not certainly known, to this it has been answered,

1. That the Credit and Authority of a Book depends many Times much more upon the good Assurance that we have of the Time when it was written, and of the Character of the Person that wrote it, than upon the certain Knowledge of his Name. It is therefore of no great Consequence whether St. Paul or St. Luke, or St. Clement or St. Barnabas, wrote the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; or whether the Epistles, called the *second* and *third* of St. John, were written by St. John the Evangelist, or by another John, Bishop of *Ephesus*; 'tis sufficient these Writers were Men of Integrity and Ability. And of this, beside the Testimony of the Ancients, there is good Evidence in the Writings themselves.

2. In answer to all other Objections of this Sort against *these*, or any other *Books*, or *Chapters*, or *Paragraphs*, of the *New Testament*, there is nothing in these, which is not taught in some other undoubted and uncontroverted Part of the same Book. So that if those controverted Parts of the New Testament were still of uncertain Authority, our Christianity would suffer no real Loss thereby.

2. Whereas 'tis said, that some Parts of the New Testament have been rejected in ancient Times: This is granted. But then it hath been shewn, that considering by *whom* and for what they have been rejected, *viz.* by *Hereticks* and *Judaizing Christians*, because they contradicted their private and singular Notions; this Objection is of no Force to invalidate even *those Parts* of the New Testament, which have been so rejected, and much less, of the rest of the Book, which has been *allowed* by all. And

3. Whereas it is said, that the Epistles to the *He-*

brews, *St. James*, the 2d of *St. Peter*, the 2d and 3d of *St. John*, the *Epistle of St. Jude*, and the *Revelations*, which are now received, as Parts of the New Testament, were not universally received in the most early Times, as such; this is likewise granted. But in answer to it, it is said,

4. That there is good Evidence from Antiquity, that these *controverted Books* were received in the most early Times by those to whom they were sent, and in general by the whole *Greek Church*.

2. 'Tis no Wonder that *these Books* (which were written either to *Christians dispersed*, or to *private Persons*) were not so easy to be attested, and upon that Account, not so generally received, as the others were, which were either written to particular Churches, or were published where they were written. And

3. That even those Churches which did doubt of the Authority of *these Books*, were persuaded at last to receive them; as the authentic *Writings* of the *Apostles*, or other inspired Men. And this makes it evident, that the first Ages of Christianity did not greedily swallow any Book for divine Revelation, that contained a great many Miracles, mixed with a few good Morals, without making due Enquiry concerning the Author and Authority thereof.

On the contrary, their being so hard to receive these Books, 'till they were satisfied of their Authority, gives very good Ground to believe, that they had from the Beginning such Evidence, as was without Exception, of the Authority of *all the uncontroverted Books of the New Testament*.

But 4. It hath been further objected, that in the early Times of Christianity, there were several *counterfeit Gospels* and *Epistles*, and 'tis possible some of them may have slipped into the *Canon* unawares to the first *Christians*, who were more remarkable for their *Honesty*, than their *Parts* and *Learning*.

But

But this Objection (granting the Matter of Fact to be true) is so far from lessening, that it rather adds to that *reasonable Assurance* that we have, that all the Books of the Canon are true; because the more there were of these *counterfeit Books*, the more cautious the first Christians would naturally be of admitting any into the Canon, 'till their Authority were very well attested.

And that those first Christians wanted not Skill to discern between a *true* and a *spurious Writing* is evident from those *Monuments* of excellent Parts, and Learning of *some* of the first *Converts* to Christianity, which are still extant. But,

5. and lastly, It hath been further said, that if *all* the *Books* of the *New Testament* that are now received, were originally written by the Apostles, or other inspired Men, yet we have now only Copies of them, which are greatly altered by the *Ignorance* or *Oversight* or *evil Design* of so many *Transcribers*, as may be seen by the many *various Readings*, so that we cannot be sure whether any particular *Passages* are the very *Words* of an *Apostle*, or of a careless *Scribe*.

But to this it has been answered,

1. That so far as this Objection is of any Force, it invalidates the *Credit* of all *History*, as well as the *New Testament*. Nay indeed of all other Books, much more than of *this*; for the *faithfully transcribing* whereof, it may reasonably be presumed, there was formerly greater Care taken, than there ordinarily was of other Books, that were of less Consequence.

2. That though *Heretics* have attempted to *corrupt* the *Text* in some Places, yet from the general Agreement of all Copies (except those *few* they corrupted) their Attempts of this Kind have been rendered *successless*.

3. It is further answered, that it is morally impossible, that there should have been a *general Depravation*

pravation of the *Copies* of this *Book*, either designedly, or by Chance, in any *Place* of Consequence, either in Point of *History*, or *Doctrine*.

There could be no such Depravation while the Apostles lived, because they would have detected it, and have corrected the injured *Places*.

Nor could it be after their Deaths, for by that Time there were an infinite Number of true Copies dispersed in all Parts of the Christian Church; and besides the *Autographs* of the Books themselves were then probably in Being; so that the Fraud would have been quickly discovered, or the Mistakes rectified.

And it is less possible it should be after the *Originals* were *lost*, or *worn out*; for by this Time there were many Copies dispersed, and *Translations*, and several *Commentaries* written thereupon; and the further we go down; the more impossible it is, that the Copies should be *generally corrupted*; as well as more likely there should be more *various Readings*; concerning which,

4. It is said, They are no other than what are to be met with in comparing the *Manuscripts* of all other Books; and that these various Readings help to rectify Mistakes, which have been made in some Copies; and that in those Places where there are such *various Readings*, it is not *material* which is the true *Reading*.

5. In answer to this Objection, that the *Text* of the *New Testament* is *corrupted*, and consequently of uncertain Authority, it is further said, that supposing these Books were written by divine Inspiration, the same Goodness of God which took Care for the Writing, has taken Care to preserve them from any material Corruption.

Thus having shewed that we have *sufficient Reason* to believe that the Books of the New Testament were written by those Persons, who are said to be the Authors thereof: I proceed,

2. To

2. To shew there is *sufficient Reason* to give full Credit to these Authors in their Relations of those *Matters of Fact*, which they have recorded. Which will appear,

1. If we consider the *Nature, Conditions, and Circumstances* of the *Matters* therein recorded, and of the *History* itself.

2. If we consider the Capacity that the Authors thereof were in to know the Truth of the Things related.

3. If we consider the Obligations they were under to write the *Truth*.

4. If we consider the good *Evidences* that we have of their *Honesty* and *Faithfulness*; and,

5. If we consider the Confirmation that was given to the Truth of their History by *God himself*.

1. If we only consider the *Nature, Conditions, and Circumstances* of the *Matters* therein recorded, and of the *History* itself. Concerning which, two Things may be observed.

1. That the *Matters* recorded by the *Evangelical Writers*, are such as might be *certainly known*.

2. That they are such, and in *such Manner related* by the *Evangelists*, that if their History of them had been false, it could never have gained Credit in the World.

1. The *Matters* recorded by the *Evangelical Writers* are such as might be known. For,

1. They are for the most part plain *Matters of Sense*, which those who testified them might be as certain of, as we can be of any Thing we *see* or *hear*.

For thus, whether our Saviour gave out he was the Messiah; whether he said he was the Son of God; and whether he uttered those *Speeches* that are recorded as spoken by him, must be known by those who heard him, and especially by his *Apostles*, who constantly attended him.

And so likewise, whether Christ did those many wonder-

wonderful *Works* which the Evangelists have recorded of him, could not but be known by those that were present with him.

And of the *other Matters* recorded by the *Evangelists*, but not as Matters of their own Knowledge, *those* from whom they had their Information, might have the same Certainty, which they had of these Things. For his *Mother* could not but know whether she had conceived him without Knowledge of a Man; and whether his Birth was foretold by an Angel, and *she* and *her Relations* might have a *certain Knowledge* of the Time, Place, and all other Circumstances of his Birth as they are related in the Gospel.

2. As the Matters recorded in the *Gospel* are chiefly Matters of Sense, of which the greatest Certainty may be had, so it may be observed, that they were done in the Presence of *many*, which adds to the Certainty of them. For a Man, when he sees such surprizing Things, as were the Miracles of Christ, alone, he is apt to suspect his Senses; but when he finds that others see the same Things, he is more confident of the Truth of them.

2. The Matters recorded in the *Gospel* are *such*, and in such a Manner related by the Evangelists, that if their History of them had been false, it could never have gained Credit in the World. For,

1: The *Gospel History* comprehends a very great Number of Facts, which were very easy to disprove, had they been *Lies*. And most Things being related by the *Evangelists* as Matters of their own Knowledge, if one single Relation had been proved to be false, the Credit of the whole History would have been destroyed.

2. The Things related in the *Gospel History* were done in a *Country* of *small Extent*, so that the History, if it had been false, was easily to be disproved.

3. The

3. The Gospel History was written and publish'd in a few Years after the Things therein recorded are said to be done; and it must needs be, that several of those, into whose Hands it came, must have certain *Knowledge*, whether some of those Things therein related had been so, or not; and they who had not this *Knowledge*, might easily have certain Information, whether the Relations therein contained were true or false; especially if we consider,

4. That the Gospel Facts are related very particularly; as, *when*, or *where*, and *upon what Occasion* they were done. And whoever had found any one *Story* falsely reported by them, would never have believed any of the rest.

5. Most of the Things recorded by the Evangelists are related by them as Things that were done very *publickly*, and as Things that were *well known* to a *great many*. Or if any Miracle was done in a House or Chamber privately, the Effects of it were very visible. And the Apostles were always with Christ. And if in any one of these the Apostles had been found *false Witnesses*, their *Credit* would have been *ruined* for ever.

Nay if they had been found false in their Report of *Matters*, of which they had not a personal *Knowledge*; though this indeed would not have been such a Proof of their Dishonesty, it would however have been such a plain Argument of their *Credulity*, as would have destroyed their *Credit* no less, than if they had been found in a known Lie. For these Matters were also of a *public Nature*; so that a Man might be satisfied whether they were true, or not.

Thus whether our Saviour was of the *House* and *Lineage* of *David*, might easily be known, when the *Genealogies* of all the *Jewish Families* were kept with great *Exactness*. Thus whether *Herod slew all the Children at Bethlehem that were under two years old*,

old, might be easily known. And if *these* and such like Things related by the Evangelists had been false, their whole History would have been of no Credit.

Indeed of the *Resurrection of our Lord*, none but his Disciples were Witnesses. (See *Acts* x. 40, 41.) But nevertheless, considering *how long*, and *how often* he appeared, and the great Number of those who saw him, (*1 Cor.* xv. 6.) their Testimony in this Matter, if it had been false, would have been easily disproved. For two Men can hardly so agree in a Lie, but upon a *separate Examination* they may be detected: How much easier then would it have been to have done this in a Matter of this Nature, and testified by so many.

Or if they had all agreed how to tell their Story, might it not be possible to *catch* them in a *Contradiction*? Besides if *Jesus* had not *rose*, the *Jews* would soon have disproved it, by shewing his dead Body; but the Body was gone, though they placed a strong Guard to watch it.

6. Another Thing that may be considered in order to shew how very improbable, or rather impossible it was, that the Gospel History should have gained Credit in the World if it had been false, is this, that as it was a History of such Matters, and was so contrived, that it might with the greatest Ease have been disproved; so the Matters therein related were in themselves, and especially in their *Consequences*, *such*, as must have engaged a *great many*, nay all *Mankind*, to *examine* strictly into the Truth of them. And if they had discovered any Falshood therein, to make known their Discovery to the World.

For the whole Doctrine of Christianity was grounded upon the Truth of the evangelical History; *this* disproved, would have destroyed *that*; and *this* being admitted, there was no Way to stop the spreading of *that*; and the Consequence of receiving

ing the Christian Religion in the World, was the abolishing all others. And therefore all Men, by *Interest*, or *Prejudice*, or *Conscience*, were engaged to convict the Apostles of Falshood, if they could ; or part with the Religion they were bred up in. And if there had been any Falshood therein, they must have found it out. But,

7. Notwithstanding the Easiness of the Disproof of the History, if it had been false, and the incessant Endeavours of the Adversaries of Christianity to find out some Falshood therein, it is nevertheless a History of very good Credit now, and has been ever since the Publication of it. And that 'tis not so much as *contradicted* in any Point by any contemporary Historian, either upon certain Knowledge of his own, or any credible Information from others, that any Matter therein had been falsely related.

The Infidels perhaps will say, that doubtless there were such Histories, but that the Christians have destroyed them.

But what slender Ground there is for this Suggestion, a few Words will suffice to shew. For,

1. Whereas 'tis said, that tho' indeed there are no Histories now in Being, whereby the *Gospel History* can be disproved, 'tis possible there may have been. To this I answer, that if this Surmise of a Thing barely possible be a good Objection against the Gospel History, 'tis as much against all other ancient Histories : For there is no ancient History now extant, which we can be sure was never contradicted by some other, as ancient History that is not extant. But,

2. As there is no Evidence that the *Gospel History* was contradicted, when it was first published ; so there is on the other side, as good Evidence as such a Matter is capable of, that it never was *contradicted*. Because if the *Gospel Facts* had been disproved

proved by credible Witnesses, Christianity would never have spread so fast. Nothing but the strong Evidence of the Truth of it, could have supported the Profession of Christianity against that violent Opposition it met with. And,

3. Whereas it is suggested that the Loss of those ancient Books is owing to the Power and Subtlety of the Christians, to *stifle* that Evidence which they could not answer, this is groundless and malicious.

For many Books of all Sorts and Sizes have *perished* by *Accident*, or been *worn* out by *Time*. And why may not those Anti-Gospel Histories (if there were such) have perished one of these Ways? Or they might be of *little Value*; or the *Matter* of them *false*; and therefore no Man thought them worth preserving.

But I am sure that, *that* before suggested by them, *viz.* that it was by *Design* that the first Christians destroyed them, is a more improbable Account, than that I have given.

For it must be supposed, either that these Anti-Gospel Histories were written very *early*, or else in *after Times*. And if they were *destroyed* by the Christians, this must have been done either soon *after* they were written, or after they had been for some *Time* received, as true Histories.

Now if these Books were written a *good while after* the Gospel was preached and *written*, they were written too late to weaken the Credit of the *Gospel-History*; for how could those who were not *born*, pretend to contradict the Testimony of those who were *Eye-witnesses* of what they testify'd; or received the Account from those who were *Eye-witnesses*? But,

If these Books were wrote as early as the *Gospel-History*, then 'tis impossible to suppose them suppressed by the Christians either *then*, or *afterwards*.

Not

Not *then*, for the Christians were *few*, without *Wealth*, or *Power*, of no *Interest*, or *Esteem*, in the World. They were not able to call in, and suppress all the Books that were wrote against them; the civil Governments were against them: And they that believe this, believe the most incredible Thing in the World.

Nor did they *afterwards*, when they had *Power*, destroy these supposed *Anti-Gospel Historians*. For 'tis utterly incredible they should ever have attained such *Power* if the Gospel History had almost from the Beginning been opposed and contradicted by other Historians, that were more credible than the Gospel History was. For at the first preaching of Christianity, the Power of the World was against the Preachers of it; and if they had been found out to have been Impostors, the Interest and Power of the World must have put an End to the Imposture.

Having shewn, that there is sufficient Reason to give full Credit to the Authors of the historical Books of the New Testament in their *Relations* of those *Matters of Fact* they have recorded;

1. From a Consideration of the *Nature*, *Condition*, and *Circumstances* of the Matters therein recorded, and of the History itself. I come,
2. To shew the good *Capacity* that the Writers of the *Evangelical History* were in to know the Truth of those Things they have related.

St. *Matthew* and St. *John*, two of the four Evangelists, were in constant Attendance upon our Lord, from the Time he first began to preach, untill he was received up into Heaven. So that they were *Eye-witnesses* of what he did.

Of St. *Mark* and St. *Luke* indeed the same cannot be said; but St. *Mark* was a constant Companion of St. *Peter*, who was with our Lord; and it was generally believed in the ancient Church, that St. *Peter* was more truly the Author of the Gospel

called *St. Mark's*, than *St. Mark* himself, he being only his *Amanuensis*.

St. Luke was a very early Convert to Christianity, conversed with the Apostles, and was a constant Companion of *St. Paul*; so that most of the Things which he relates in the *Acts of the Apostles*, he was probably an *Eye-witness* of.

In this Respect, the Gospel-History is manifestly as credible as any History should be; for no Historian can record any Thing upon better Assurance, than the Evidence of his Senses.

But the Gospel of *St. Luke* is not of this Sort; he does not pretend that the Matters by him recorded were of his own Knowledge. But 'tis considered that there are very few Things related by *St. Luke*, which are not to be found in the other Gospels, his Testimony that he had a perfect Information of the Things he has recorded from several Eye-witnesses, adds a Degree of Credibility even to the other Gospels.

Having shew'd the Authors of the historical Parts of the *New Testament* were in a good Capacity to know the Truth of the Things they have recorded. I proceed,

3. To shew the strong *Obligations* they were under to write nothing but Truth.

Now the Obligations that Men are under to speak and write Truth, may be reduced to two Heads, *Honour* and *Conscience*.

1. *Honour*: And this Obligation to Truth was stronger on the Authors of the Evangelical History than on most other Historians, is evident from what was noted before, concerning the *Nature* and *Conditions* of the Things by them related, and of their History of them. For the Matter of other Historians is such, that the Historians might report many Things upon slight Grounds, without being reputed Liars; because the Matters recorded being

either

either Things done a good Way off, or a long Time before, or in the Presence of a few Persons, they might know that their Readers could not contradict them. Or they might suppose they rather would acquiesce in their Report, than take so much Pains to disprove it, especially if it was a Matter of no great Consequence.

But the Gospel-History concerned a great many to find out whether it was true; and if it had been false in any Particular, it might have been discovered with the greatest Ease; because most into whose Hands it first came, would either have known it to be false, or have told it was so. So that if the Evangelists had any regard to their own *Reputation*, it can't be imagined either that they did record any Thing contrary to their Knowledge, or that in Matters that were not of their own Knowledge, they neglected to get the best Information they could: Because if they had done either of these, they could not have hoped to escape being censured as the most notorious *Liars*. But,

2. The strongest Obligation to speak or write nothing but Truth, is *Conscience*.

And this Obligation to Truth was likewise stronger on the Authors of the Evangelical History, than on most other Historians.

For to speak and write the Truth, was what they were not only obliged to by the Law of Nature, and by the *Jewish* Religion they were bred up in, but especially by the strict Command of him, whom they had lately taken for their Master, under the Penalty of eternal Damnation.

The *Subject Matter* of their Relation did also lay upon them the strongest Obligation to have a strict Regard to Truth in every Thing. For if it be a Sin to lie in a *common* Matter, 'tis a greater to do it in *serious* Things. And if it be a Sin to tell a lie of a *Man*, 'tis more heinous to report an untruth

of God; and if it be unjustifiable to lead Men into a *Mistake*, tho' no ill Consequence attends it, what a Sin must it be to lead Men into an Error that may be fatal to them to all Eternity?

If therefore the Gospel History be false, there was manifestly such a *Complication* of Wickedness in the Compilers of it as cannot reasonably be supposed.

If it be objected, that this is not a direct Proof that the *Evangelists* were true and faithful in their Relations, but only a *Presumption* that they were so.

I add further, that besides this *reasonable Presumption*, of the Truth of the Witnesses of the *Gospel History*, there is as *good positive Proof* of their Truth as can be required. *viz.*

4. The good *Evidences* that we have of their Honesty and Faithfulness.

And here it is to be noted, that the Evangelists seem to be *impartial*; they were free in telling what were, or might be *disgraceful* to their Master, or themselves. They tell us plainly the Meanness of his *Parentage*, *Birth*, and Condition, and Affronts, Contempt, and ignominious Death. And of themselves, they inform us, they were only *Fishermen*, *Tentmakers*, and *Publicans*. They own they were ignorant Men. They tell their own childish Mistakes about the Nature of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*; they mention their own ambitious Contentions, and confess their Cowardice in forsaking their Master.

They were Persons not liable to any Suspicion of Unfaithfulness in their Relation, because they that could not be charged with any *other Crimes*, were not justly to be suspected guilty of *Forgery* and *Lying*.

Another Argument of their Veracity is, that they could have no worldly Interest in publishing those
Stories

Stories which they related, and 'tis not to be supposed, that any Man will frame or report a Lie for nothing, especially such a one as would expose them to Persecutions from all Sorts of Men.

But the strongest Argument of their Veracity is, that no Promises could persuade, nor the *sharpest Torments*, nor even Death itself, prevail with them to retract what they had said, and affirmed. Accordingly, that we might have the surest Grounds of Belief, it pleased the divine Wisdom so to order it, that all the Apostles, except St. *John*, died Martyrs for the Testimony of *Jesus*.

These are in short the *Evidences* we have of the *Honesty* and *Faithfulness* of the Evangelists. And I think we may affirm, that though we consider it only as a mere human *History*, we have much better Reason to give Credit to it than to any History in the World besides. But further I come now,

3. To consider the *Confirmation* that was given to the Truth of their History by God *himself*.

For at the same Time that they witnessed the *Miracles* of their Master, they gave Assurance to Men of the Truth of their Testimony, by doing the like *Miracles* themselves. And at the same Time, that pursuant to their Commission, they preached the Gospel to Men of *all Nations* and *Languages*, they plainly demonstrated their Commission to be from God, by speaking to every Man in his *own Tongue*, which they never could have done, (if God had not been with them.)

But if it be objected, that though they who saw the *Miracles* which the Apostles are reported to have done, had Reason to believe their Testimony concerning him; yet what is this to us that live now? For we neither saw the *Miracles*, or heard them speak with *Tongues*, neither have we any Assurance, that they ever did the one or the other, but only from themselves.

But to this Objection I answer,

1. That the Testimony of the Apostles themselves is not the only Proof we have of the Miracles, which they wrought for the Confirmation of their Testimony concerning *Jesus*. We have likewise the Testimony of all the other Christian Writers for the Truth of it, in their Apologies, which they published to the whole World, in or near the Apostles Time; in which they callenged their Enemies to contradict their Testimony. Who owned that mighty Works had been done by *Jesus* and the Apostles; only they said they were done by *Magic*.

But 2. If we had not so good Proof of the *Miracles* done by the *Apostles*, their own Testimony would be very credible.

We see that a great Part of the World is now Christian, and looking back we see when, and how it came to be so. And by the concurrent Testimony of all History we learn, that in a very short Time it was preached over the whole World. And whoever believes that Christianity (a Religion so contrary to the *Lusts*, *Passions*, and the *carnal Interest* of Men) could make so swift, and so great a Progress, only by the Preaching of the Apostles, without any *miraculous Gifts*, wants not Faith enough to be a Christian, if he had but a Will to it, for he believes already a much greater Miracle than any that is recorded in the *Evangelical Story*.

For 'tis to be considered, that the Christian Religion proposed to Mens Belief, such Doctrines as appeared to the carnal Minds of Men *foolish* and *incredible*; as that the eternal Son of God should become Man, and suffer and die for our Sakes; that he should rise again, ascend into Heaven, sit at the right Hand of God, and be adored by all Men with the same Honour, wherewith they honour the Father; and was appointed by God to be Judge of the quick and dead, &c.

'Tis to be considered likewise, that it was a Religion perfectly destructive of all other Forms of Religion, and on that Account would meet with the strongest Prejudices. And,

Lastly, 'tis to be considered further, that the miraculous Works, by which the divine Mission of the Lord Jesus was proved, were such as being above the known Power of natural Causes, were not like to be easily *credited*.

What then, I say, could *twelve* Men, tho' ever so well qualified with all Parts of Learning, do towards persuading the World to embrace *Christianity*? Who would have believed the Report of what they had seen and heard? Who would have given Credit to a Relation of such incredible Stories, told with a Design to introduce a Religion that was unknown to their Fathers, and one that worshiped as *God*, a Man who was crucified?

Or if it can be supposed that the Apostles by the Boldness of their Speech might prevail with a few to become Profelytes, yet their Disciples would not have been very numerous, before the Government of the Country, where they were, would have called in question these *Setters-forth of new Gods*, and then their Disciples would soon desert them, when there was Danger, and when they saw their Teachers imprisoned and put to Death.

And, if their united Testimony would have had so little Effect, much less can it be supposed, that the *single Witness* of one Apostle could ever have gained any Credit at all: And yet, unless the Testimony of some single Witnesses had been believed, 'tis impossible there should have been in so short a Time, so great a Conversion of Men to *Christianity*, in all Parts of the World, by the Preaching of so few Men.

So that whoever believes that Christianity could make so swift a Progress only by the Preaching of

the Apostles, without any miraculous Gifts, believes the greatest Miracle that ever was.

And now I hope it appears, that there is sufficient Reason to give full *Credit* to the Authors of the *historical Books* of the *New Testament*, in their Relations of those Matters of Fact which they have recorded.

If upon this Occasion it should be said, that the Facts recorded in the Evangelical History, and the Events that followed were so wonderful, that if they had been true, they must in all probability have been *more* taken Notice of than they are in other Histories : I answer, that supposing them true, it could not be reasonably expected that more mention should have been made of them by other Historians than there really is ; because they were foreign to their Purpose, or else they had taken no Pains to examine into them ; or how could it be expected that an Historian who was not a Christian, should give a large Account of the Miracles of our *Saviour* and his Apostles. 'Tis enough that they are not by any Historians, that were of another Religion contradicted, more than this would have been too much. And should we now in some ancient Manuscript new brought to Light, and bearing the Name of some *Jewish* or *Heathen* Author, find a large Account of any of those Facts relating to the Christian Religion, this would give very just Ground to suspect that the whole History was forged, or at least that those Passages relating to the Christian Religion, or the Author of it, were *foisted* in by some Christian Transcriber. For this is indeed the best Argument that is brought to discredit some Passages of this Kind that are now to be found in some *Heathen* or *Jewish* Historians, *viz.* that they say more than was proper or likely to be said by *Heathens* or *Jews*.

Now this is not fair, that both the *Paucity* and *Multi-*

Multitude of such Testimonies should be both urged against Christianity. And therefore when they are urged, we may conclude, that the Truth is in the mean.

It only remains to enquire whether there be in the Gospel-History any *intrinsic Evidences of Falshood*.

'Tis pretended by Infidels, that there are some Things in the Gospel-History *incredible*; that there are great *Differences* in the several Relations of the same Story; and not only so, but that there are many flat *Contradictions*. In answer to which,

1. I observe, that the pretended *Impossibilities* in the Gospel are only *Difficulties*. They are indeed Events beyond the Power of Nature, but are very credible, when they are ascribed to the Almighty Power of God.

2. The *Difference* in the several Relations of the same Story by the several *Evangelists* is very *inconsiderable*; consisting only in this, that the one relates the same Story with more or less Circumstances than the other. And this is rather a *Proof* of the Truth of the History, than a Confutation of it. For 'tis an Argument that the Evangelists did not confer together, but wrote the Story as they remembered it, and with such Circumstances as they themselves took most Notice of. And

3. As to the *Inconsistences* said to be in the Evangelical History, these we deny. For

As to the Relation of *Judas's* Death, there is no *Contradiction* in it; if we should say, that after he *banged himself*, as *St. Matthew* says, he did *fall down*, and that his *Bowels gushed out*, as *St. Luke* affirms; or it may be he did not *bang* himself, but was only suffocated by the Violence of his Grief, and that the same Passion by which he was strangled made him also *fall down headlong and burst asunder in the midst*, so that all his *Bowels gushed out*.

And as to the seeming Inconsistency in the Account

count of our Saviour's *Genealogy*: 'Tis to be remembered, that by the *Jewish* Law the next of Kin was to raise up Seed to his near Relation, that died without Issue, by marrying his Widow, and that the first-born of the Woman after such second Marriage was reputed *in Law* the Son, as well as he was the Heir of the Deceased; so that consequently the same Person might be the *legal* Son of one Man, and the *natural* Son of another; tho' it may be impossible for us at this Distance of Time to say which of the two different Lines, by which our Christ's Pedigree is deduced from *David*, is the *legal*, and which the *natural* Line; it is very easy to believe that one is the *legal*, and that the other is the *natural* Line. And if so, there is no Contradiction between the two Evangelists; although St. *Matthew* makes our Saviour to be descended from *Solomon*, and St. *Luke* from *Nathan*; although St. *Matthew* says, that *Joseph* was the Son of *Jacob*, and St. *Luke* that he was the Son of *Heli*.

Having shewn that there is *sufficient* Reason to give full Credit to the Apostles in the *Relations* of those Facts they have recorded: I proceed,

3. To shew, that if the Matters of Fact recorded in the new Testament are true, they are *sufficient* *Proofs* of the *Truth* and *divine Authority* of all the *Doctrines* that are taught therein.

By the *Doctrines* of the *Gospel* I understand both the *Articles of Faith*, and *Rules of Practice*.

And I suppose it will be granted, that all their *Doctrines* are *true*, and of *divine Authority*, if it shall appear that our Saviour and his Apostles were *sent* by God to instruct the World.

And *first*, Whether our Saviour was a Teacher sent from God?

That our Saviour was sent from God is a Matter of Fact. See *John* xii. 49.

And that he said he was the *Messiah*, is likewise Matter of Fact. *John* iv. 25, 26. The

The Question therefore is, Whether from the Things which are recorded of him, there be sufficient Ground to believe the Truth of these *Pre-
tences*.

And here I shall consider,

1. The *Credibility* of our Saviour's own Testimony concerning himself.

2. The Confirmation of it given by God.

1. I shall consider the *Credibility* of our Saviour's own Testimony concerning himself.

I know 'tis said, a Man is not to be believed in his own Cause; but our Saviour's *Credibility* will sufficiently appear, if these following Things be considered.

1. That his whole Life was in all Respects blameless. And this he urges as a Reason why his Testimony ought to be credited. See *John* viii. 46.

2. It may be considered also, that this Testimony of our Lord, though it was concerning *himself*, yet was not for *himself*; that is, not for his own worldly Advantage. And this he offers as an Argument of the Truth of his Testimony. See *John* vii. 18.

3. It may be further considered, that this Testimony of our Lord concerning himself was not only of no Benefit, but of great Diservice to him; and that these Sufferings did not befall him *unexpectedly*, he foretold what was to befall him; and therefore there can be no Reason why he should say he was sent from God, but only because he knew it was true.

Especially if it be considered,

4. That he owned that he was the Messiah at his Death. This therefore is a strong Confirmation of the Truth of this Testimony of our Lord; for 'tis not to be supposed that any Man tells a Lie for nothing: And no Man could be so *foolish* as to expect to better himself in the other World, by dying with a Lie in his Mouth.

I come

I come now,

2. To shew the Confirmation that was given to our Lord's Testimony by God himself; and this was given several Ways.

1. God bare him Witness by the Testimony of *ancient Prophets*, to whom our Saviour appeals, *John* v. 39. 46. who foretold exactly the *Time* of his *coming*, the *Manner* of his *Life*, the Things he was to do, the Sufferings he was to undergo: And this was a manifest Proof he was the *Messiah*; for it cannot be supposed that the *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, and *Providence* of God would permit all the *Marks* of the true Messiah to meet together in an *Impostor*; because by this Mankind must have lain under an inevitable Necessity of being cheated in a Matter of the greatest Consequence, their eternal Salvation.

But the ancient Prophecies of Christ being many of them not easily to be understood, it therefore pleased God to give a more perfect Knowledge of him to the Men of that Generation, in which he appeared.

2. By the Testimony of *John the Baptist*, who directly shewed him to the *Jews*. *Behold*, says he, *the Lamb of God*. *John* i. 29, 30.

And to this Testimony of *John*, our Saviour frequently appealed, as to a Testimony that was full to the Purpose. *John* v. 32. *Matt.* xxi. 23, &c. And that St. *John* was a Prophet, was so evident to all, by the wonderful Manner of his Birth, and the miraculous Circumstances that attended it, that all the People were persuaded that he was one.

3. Another Way, by which God gave Witness to our Saviour, was by a *Voice from Heaven*, which was given him three times.

First, at his *Baptism*. *Matt.* iii. 16.

A second Time at his *Transfiguration*, *Matt.* xvii. 5. of this two of the Apostles were Witnesses, *2 Pet.* i. 17. *1 John* v. 7.

A third

A third Time was at the raising of *Lazarus*, which was so loud, that all that were present heard it, tho' not distinctly, by reason, as 'tis probable, some were farther off than others.

4. Another Way by which God gave Witness to the *divine Mission* of our Saviour, was by enduing him with the *Gift of Prophecy*. See *Matt.* xvi. 21. xx. 17. *Mark* ix. 31. x. 33. *Matt.* xxiv. 14. iii. 19. &c. *Matt.* xxvi. 21. *John* vi. 70. *Matt.* xxvi. 4. 31. *John* iii. 14. viii. 28. xii. 32. *Matt.* xxvi. 2. xxviii. 16.

And some of his Prophecies were fulfilled soon after they were spoken, and are a just Ground of expecting the Accomplishment of all the other in their Season, and an evident Proof that he was endued with a divine Spirit, for none but God could foretel such Things.

And if to this it be objected, that future Events have been sometimes foretold by such as have not been true Prophets of God. I answer, that if this be granted, it will not weaken the Proof of our Saviour's divine Mission.

For there may be some future Events unforeseen by us, and yet so entirely depending upon natural Causes, that they will certainly come to pass, unless hindered by a Miracle. And these the Devil who is wiser than us, may foresee and foretel; and when such a Thing is foretold, we may think it a Prophecy, when in reality it is none.

And even in future *Contingencies*, 'tis no wonder that Events have sometimes verified the Predictions of the *Devil* and his *Prophets*, for he perfectly understands the Tempers, and Inclinations, and Interest of Men, and can foretel by a Guess that rarely fails, a great many Things, which the wisest Men could not have thought of: And when the Things that were foretold come to pass, we cannot judge whether it was foretold by a sagacious Guess,

Guess, or by a certain Fore-knowledge of what would be.

And that the Predictions of *Diviners* and the *Oracles* of the *Heathens* have been no more than probable Conjectures, is evident by their uncertain Accomplishment; and by the Devil's cloathing his Oracles in *ambiguous Expressions*, that so, whatever happened, he might be thought to have foretold it.

5. Another Testimony that was given by God to the *divine Mission* of our Saviour, was the Power of working *Miracles*.

And to these he appeals, as a Proof of his Mission. *John v. 36.*

And if it be objected, that these mighty Works might be done by magic Art, and by the Help of the Devil: And therefore they who saw them were not convinced by them upon that Account. I answer,

1. That they did not believe in him, because they were not convinced that his Miracles were done by a divine Power, but because it was against their Interest and their Passions.

Nay many believed on him, but they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue; for they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.

2. If their Blasphemy in ascribing our Saviour's Miracles to the Power of the Devil was not merely malicious, 'twas however groundless. For,

1. Tho' the Devil can do many Things which to the Eyes of Men may appear miraculous, there is no Reason to believe he can alter the Course of Nature, or produce any Thing, but by natural Causes. And therefore the Apostle calls those strange Appearances, which are done by the working of Satan, *Lying Wonders*.

But our Saviour's Miracles were not only in Appearance, but in Truth, were beyond the Power of Nature,

Nature, and therefore such as could not be done but by God. But,

2. If the Miracles of our Saviour had been only such as did not exceed the Devil's Power to do, yet that they were not done by him is evident, for he is too cunning to have destroyed his own Kingdom, and to make use of his own Power against himself. See *Matt. xii. 25.*

3. As it is not credible, that the Devil has such Power; or if he has, and was let alone to himself, that he would make use of that Power to destroy his own Kingdom; so neither is it credible, that God would permit the Devil to outdo him in Miracles, by suffering more Miracles to be wrought by a false Prophet, than by any true one. Which yet is manifestly the Case, if indeed our Saviour was an *Impostor*. Because this would deceive those who were desirous after, and Lovers of Truth; which the Goodness of God would not permit.

6. Another Way by which God bare Witness of our Saviour's Testimony was, by raising him from the Dead. See *Acts xvii. 30. Rom. i. 4.*

For granting our Saviour's Resurrection, it can't be supposed that he was an *Impostor*, without supposing that God himself did consent to the Imposture, and work the most evident Miracles, to persuade Men to believe a Lie; because none but God could do it.

7. Another Way by which God bare Witness of our Saviour's Testimony of himself, was the Witness of the Holy Ghost, which was given him at his Baptism, and during the Course of his Ministry; and those Gifts of the Holy Ghost which he showed down on his Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, *Acts ii. 1, &c.*

And this Testimony he promised before, *John xv. 26.* should be given to him. And by this it appeared, his former Miracles were true, when af-

ter he left this World he was still able to make good this Promise to his Disciples.

And this Testimony was not given to our Saviour only at that Time, but continued to be given him, until they finished their Ministry, and planted Christianity in all the Countries of the known World.

Having shewn the Evidence there is from the *Matters of Fact* recorded in the History of the New Testament, that our Saviour was sent from God, I come now,

2. To shew the Apostles were likewise commissioned by God, and consequently that we ought to receive their *Doctrines* as true and divine. For,

1. They are the very *same* that our Saviour *taught*. But,

2. If there be any Doctrines taught by the Apostles which Christ did not teach, there is however Evidence *enough* of their divine Mission; so that we may believe their Doctrine. For,

1. If the Gospel History be true, they were sent by Christ. See *John* xx. 21. *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20. And that he had Authority to grant them such a Commission, he shews, ver. 18. And

2. That they were *taught* by God can't be doubted if we believe the Gospel. See *John* xx. 22. xvi. 13. xiv. 26. And

3. We have all the Reason in the World to receive them as *Messengers* from God, because they had the same Attestation of God as our Saviour had. For he bare Witness to them that they were sent by him, by the Testimony of our Saviour, as he had done to our Saviour, by the Testimony of *John*. And if the Testimony of a Prophet was credible concerning our Saviour, much more is the Testimony of the Son of God highly credible concerning a *Messenger*.

He also bare Witness to them, by enduing them with

with the Gift of Prophecy, *Jobn xvi. 13. and Miracles, Mark xvi. 20. Acts iv. 33.*

From what has been said, there is but one Objection that can justify any Person in not receiving the Gospel as a divine Revelation, *viz.* That some of its Doctrines are *incredible*, especially the *Trinity*.

But why should it be deemed incredible? 'Tis not impossible for an infinite and eternal Being to beget a Son in his own Likeness. Nor is it impossible, that there should be a third Person *proceeding* from both these. The Scripture does not say, they are *three* and *one* in the same Respect, it only tells us in general that these *three are one*. But how they are *three*, or how they are *one*, it says not.

If therefore there be no Contradiction in the Doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*, that's enough. For though it is an *incomprehensible Mystery*, there is no Reason to cavil at the *Gospel-Revelation*, or deny it upon this Account.

For we live and believe in a World of *Mysteries* which we cannot fathom. That *Matter is not eternal*, we are sure, and yet how it should be made out of nothing is as inconceivable as the Doctrine of the *Trinity*.

That God is eternal is certain also, yet that any Thing should exist without a Cause is unaccountable. Thus we are led by the Light of Reason only to a firm Belief of some Truths, which yet we can give no Account of by our Reason. And therefore we ought to believe the Mystery of the *Trinity*, though we do not understand it, upon the Credit of a well-attested Revelation, as well as we do believe those Things upon the Evidence of Reason. Especially considering the Subject of this incomprehensible Doctrine, is the *Essence* of God, who is an infinite Being, and so must needs be incomprehensible by our finite Understandings, which know not the *Essence* of any Thing, nor

even our own *Essence*. And therefore it is no Wonder, that by all our searching we cannot find out God to Perfection.

Having therefore shewed, that the present standing Revelation of God's Will is sufficient to persuade Men: I proceed to the

II. General Head to shew, that having such Grounds of Faith, it is an *unreasonable Request* to desire more. Which will appear, if we consider these following Things.

I. That the Principles of Faith and the Motives to Repentance which we have already, being well grounded upon *Matters of Fact*, which have been once already sufficiently proved, 'tis needless that any further Proof should be given; and 'tis what we never think reasonable to desire in other Cases.

1. The *Unreasonableness* of our *now* desiring *fresh Revelation*, and *new Miracles*, to confirm the Truth of those Things which are already sufficiently proved to us by a *standing Revelation* of the *Gospel*, will further appear, if we consider,

That to *us* who now live in Christian Countries, other Grounds of Faith than we have already in the standing Revelation of the Gospel, might be inconsistent with the *Excellency* of *Faith*, and be too great a *Constraint* upon us; and such as would in a Manner take away our Liberty of *Choice*.

If we had fresh Miracles worked every Day to confirm those Doctrines which are already sufficiently confirmed, they would not persuade, but force us to be Christians; so that the *State* we are now in, would not be a State of Trial, as God designed it.

But if it be objected here, that the Evidence which we desire of the Truth of Religion is *no more* than those had, who lived in the *Apostles* Times; and we cannot see why it should be more inconsistent

with

with the Nature of Faith *now* than it was *then*, or how it would be a *greater Force* upon *our Choice* than it was upon theirs.

But in Answer to this it may be considered, that though they *saw* the Miracles that were wrought for the Confirmation of Christianity, yet they had not a credible History, as we have, of a very *great Number of Miracles* that were wrought for that Purpose. And therefore if we, who have already very good Reason to believe, were admitted to be Eye-witnesses of fresh Miracles, both these Evidences would be stronger than *either* of them *alone*; so that consequently, if we who have already one of these Evidences, were allowed to have the other also, we should have more Evidence in the whole than they had; and consequently *our Choice* would not be so free as theirs was.

But perhaps you will say, that if we had the same Evidence that they had, we should be content to want the historical Evidence. For they had greater Reason to be Christians than we have. For

1. The Apostles, who saw Christ's Miracles, and were enabled to do the like, had greater Reason to believe than those who saw them work Miracles. And

2. They, who saw with their own Eyes the Miracles, had greater Reason to believe, than those had to whom they were reported by Eye-witnesses; and therefore much rather than we have, who live at so great a Distance.

Now all that we desire is, to have the same Reason to be Christians as they had, which we think not unreasonable.

In answer to this I shall consider the two Cases before mentioned, and compare the same with ours.

1. That the Apostles had a *surer* Ground of Belief than others, is certain; but then it is to be considered on the other Side;

1. That the Apostles and Disciples at first were few in Number.

2. That this Advantage of greater Evidence was necessary to qualify them for that *special* Office they were to be employ'd in ; which was to *bear Witness* to the Men of that Generation by Word of Mouth, and to all future Ages by their written Testimony, of the Doctrines and Miracles of our Saviour : For no Man is a proper Witness of any Matter of Fact, but only he who was an *Eye-witness* thereof.

3. That as they had a more clear Evidence of the Truth of Christianity than others, so they had a greater Burden laid upon them, than any Christians since have had.

And it might be no more than necessary that the Grounds of their Faith should be as much stronger than other Mens, as their Duty was larger than other Mens. And this was the Condition of the *Apostles*, in Comparison with ours.

We have indeed several Temptations to resist, but then they are only such as are *common to Men* ; and for the overcoming whereof a Faith grounded upon *historical Evidence* is *sufficient* ; but the Apostles had *Difficulties* and *Temptations* of *another Sort* to contend with, and therefore it was plainly necessary, that a Faith which was to undergo such Trials should be built upon the surest Grounds.

That therefore the Apostles had stronger Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion, than we have, may be granted ; and yet it may be unreasonable in us to desire the same, unless we were to be put to the same Trials of our Faith, that they were, which in a Christian Country can hardly be.

And I believe there are but few of us but had rather be contented with less Evidence, than have so much as the Apostles had with its appendent Burthen.

2. The second Case before mentioned was of those who

who *heard* and *saw* the Testimony which the *Apostles* gave concerning *our Lord*. We could wish to have such Evidence, and we cannot see why there should not be as much Choice and Virtue in *our* Believing as in *theirs*.

But here it may be considered,

1. That it was the Lot but of very *few*, even of those that lived in the *Apostles* Times, except of the *Jews* that lived in *Judea*, to hear the *Apostles* themselves, or to see *their Miracles*.

So that all Things considered, the Evidence that we have of the Truth of our Religion, if it be not fully equal to, is little inferior to that which they had.

For the Gospel History being certainly true, what can be thought to be wanting in the Clearness of the Evidence that we have, is made up by the Fulness and Abundance of it; we having in the Writings of the *Apostles* and *Evangelists* several *Witnesses* testifying the *same Miracles*, and *every one* of them witnessing *more Miracles* than any, except the constant Attenders of our Lord, and his *Apostles*, were in a Capacity to witness.

2. But granting they had clearer Evidence, yet even that Evidence of Sense was not more likely to persuade them, than the Proof we now have is to convince us.

For both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were both prejudiced against it. And besides, they could not embrace the Christian Religion without hazarding all that was dear to them, and how much Mens Interest byasfs their Judgment, is very evident.

But our Case is quite otherwise; our *Prejudices* and our *Interest* are both for *Christianity*, so that to us, such Proof as we always allow of in other Cases of the like Nature is Proof *strong enough*. And therefore much rather when we have, as indeed we have, a stronger Tradition for the Truth of the *Gos-*

pel History, than of any History besides, we shall be inconsistent with ourselves, if we do not allow it to be sufficient.

3. The *Unreasonableness* of desiring more Proof of the Truth of Religion than God has been pleased to afford by the *standing Revelation* of the Gospel, will appear further, if we consider the *equal Right* that *all other Men* have to desire the same as well as any particular one. And the many *Inconveniences* and *Absurdities* that would follow, in Case all Men should be gratified in this Desire; and therefore it would not be *reasonable* for God to *grant*.

4. The *Unreasonableness* of desiring any further Proof of the Truth of Religion, besides what is already afforded us in the *holy Scriptures*, will further appear by considering our own *Interest* in being convinced and persuaded of the Truth of Religion, by such Arguments and Motives as are in themselves sufficient for that Purpose, altho' they be not so very strong as we could wish they were.

We are the only Persons who will gain, or lose by our Belief, or Disbelief, let us then be *content* with that Assurance which God has given us; for he will not gratify us in our unreasonable Desire. He is resolved to persuade, not to force us to be happy; and having already given us a standing Revelation which is sufficient to instruct us, he will give us no new ones; nor work Miracles every Day to gratify our extravagant Fancies.

And there is less Reason that he should do so, because if the ordinary Means which he uses fail, the Fault lies wholly in us. And therefore 'tis highly probable, that any other Means proper for God to use to reclaim us, would be alike unsuccessful; which brings me to the third general Point.

III. To shew that in case God should condescend to gratify Men in this unreasonable Desire, 'tis highly probable that very few, or none of those who

do not now believe, would be persuaded by this Means.

The Truth of which will appear, if we consider these Things.

1. That we can't have better *Motives* to obedience than the Scripture offers.

2. That the Evidence already given of the Truth of Religion is such as cannot fairly be objected against, and that there is no Proof but what is liable to Cavils.

3. That if God worked every Day *new Miracles*, it would go near to destroy the Persuasiveness thereof. And,

4. 'Tis Matter of Fact that *new Miracles* have been unsuccessful upon those who have not hearkened to a *standing Revelation*.

1. We cannot have better *Motives* to Obedience than the Scripture offers.

For there we have *Life* and *Death* set before us ; and if the Hope of eternal Life and Happiness, or the Dread of everlasting Misery, which are clearly promised and threatened in Scripture, will not persuade Men, nothing will.

All that could in any new Revelation be added to that Encouragement that is already given to Virtue, or to that Discouragement that is already given to Vice, would be an Assurance that there should be a remarkable Difference made in this World between *good* and *bad* Men. And we may think that if it went *well* with the Righteous, and *ill* with the Wicked here, it would do more towards the Reformation of Mankind, than only those Promises and Threatenings of future Happiness and Misery.

And this indeed might be. But 'tis to be considered, that a new Revelation to this Effect, would be inconsistent with the Nature of Religion, and would frustrate the Design of God in sending us into the World.

For if the Reward of Virtue, and the Punishment of Vice were always visible and present, there would be no Room left for *Faith* in God, which is a firm belief of the Truth of his Promises and Threatenings, tho' we do not see the Performance of them. And if good Men were always rewarded, and bad Men punished in this World, there would be no Room left for a virtuous and wise Choice.

From whence it clearly follows, that such as are not persuaded by the Gospel Motives to Repentance, are not capable of being persuaded by any such Motives, as consistently with the Nature of Faith and Religion, could be offered to them.

But perhaps it may be said, that tho' better Motives to Repentance cannot be offered by any new Revelation, yet we might have by a new Revelation, *better Assurances* given us of the Truth of the Gospel Motives; and that if we had, 'tis very likely they would be more prevailing than now.

And this likewise must be granted: But then 'tis to be considered, that the Nature of Faith and Religion, and of that State of Trial we are now in, requires that there should be a reasonable Boundary set to the Clearness of the Truth of those Methods, whereby they are to be persuaded, as well as to the Force and Strength of the Motives themselves. Because such very clear Evidence of the Truth of Religion as leaves no Room for doubt, destroys our Freedom of Choice and Virtue of Believing, for 'tis no Commendation to a Man to be virtuous, if his Virtue be not the Fruit of a wise Judgment and free Choice, which it would not be if his Judgment was over-born by irrefragable Demonstration. And if that farther Proof required be such as would leave us a Freedom of Choice, 'tis not like it should be more convincing than the standing Revelation we now have. For it may be considered,

2. The Proof already given us of the Truth of Religi-

Religion, is such as cannot fairly be excepted against, and that there is no Proof that could be given, but what is liable to foolish Cavils and *unreasonable Exceptions* ; for the same *Temper* of Mind, and the same *Unwillingness* to believe the Truths of the Gospel which now dispose Men to Infidelity, and prompt them to study and make Exceptions to the Proofs already given us of the Christian Faith, would work the same Effect, if other Proofs were given of it, and that Men would then quickly make as good Exceptions to that, as they do now to these. For if Men do not see the Truth when 'tis placed in so clear a Light, as 'tis in already, the Reason must be because they are blinded by a Love of this World, and their Lusts, and if the Light were ten Times brighter than it is, they would see no more than they do now.

The proper Cure of Infidelity is not therefore the Addition of more Proof of the Truth of Religion, but a right Disposition of Mind to consider well what is offered ; and a Love of Truth, and a Will disposed to Virtue. The Causes of Infidelity must first be removed, and till they are, Infidelity will not be cured by even Miracles themselves. Which brings me,

3. To shew, that if God should gratify Men by working new Miracles every Day, for the Conviction of particular Persons, they would be so far from adding to the Proof of Christianity, that they would rather lessen that Proof of it.

For that which most of all affects Men in a Miracle, is the *Usefulness* of it ; but Miracles would be so common, if they were wrought for the Conviction of particular Men, that they would cease to serve for the Purpose for which they were designed, and would be quickly looked upon as the Effects of natural Causes only. But,

4. Supposing that Miracles would still be thought
Miracles,

Miracles, notwithstanding their Commonness, yet he who is not wrought upon by a standing Revelation of God's Will, would not be persuaded by an extraordinary Message, or a new Miracle.

For this was very true of the *Jews* in our Saviour's Time, who as they would not believe *Moses* and the *Prophets* testifying of our Saviour, so neither did they any more believe our Saviour himself working Miracles among them. Never were such Signs and Wonders for Mens Conviction, and yet very few even of those, who were Eye-witnesses of our Saviour's Miracles, were the better for them, but the worse.

Some Examples indeed, it must be granted, there are on the other Side; for we are told, *Acts* ii. 41. that about *three thousand* believed upon the first Preaching of St. *Peter*, and Sight of that great Miracle the *Gift of Tongues*.

But then it may be considered, that it was not the Miracle alone that convinced them, for there were many present, that were so far from being persuaded, that they most falsely blasphemed that, as they had done our Saviour's Miracles.

Those who were persuaded by it, were such as before the Miracles were in a good Disposition to embrace that pure Religion that is taught in the Gospel, for the Persons convinced thereby were not of the *unbelieving Jews, and Pharisees*, but were devout Persons *Jews* or *Profelytes*, who had come from other Parts of the World to worship at *Jerusalem*, and who had probably never heard of our Saviour but by uncertain Report; but being well read in the Scriptures, and giving good Heed to them, were converted more by the manifest Accomplishment of all the ancient Prophecies concerning the *Messiah*, in the Person of our Saviour, than by the Sight of that great Miracle.

This

This therefore being *Matter of Fact*, we may reasonably infer that 'tis highly probable, if not certain, that the same Experiment tried over again, would have no better Success.

Having shewn,

1. That the present standing Revelation of God's Will in the Holy Scripture, is sufficient to persuade Men.

2. That more Evidence than we have of the Truth of our Religion cannot reasonably be desired. And having likewise shewn,

3. That any other Proof would probably be *ineffectual*, I have finished all that I designed to do upon this Subject.

Dr. STAN-

IT

Je

Dr. *STANHOPE*'s
TRUTH and EXCELLENCY
OF THE
Christian Religion

Asserted against
Jews, Infidels, and Heretics,
A B R I D G'D.

Dr. STANHOPE

TRUTH and EXCELLENCE

OF THE

Christian Religion

As compared with

Jews, Infidels, and Heretics

A BRIDG'D

T

Je

T

I
of
Jew
as
right
Do
Did

I
pen
men
and
fo
ful
the
the
hav

THE
TRUTH and EXCELLENCY
OF THE
Christian Religion

Afferted against

Jews, Infidels, and Heretics.

THE Grounds of Dissatisfaction taken at the Christian Religion, by Adversaries of different Sorts, I shall endeavour to remove:

I. By rescuing the Christian Religion from some of the Objections brought against it, whether by *Jews* or *Gentiles*. That is, that it proposes nothing as necessary to be believed or done, which when rightly understood, is repugnant, either with the Doctrine of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, or with the Dictates of right Reason.

II. By convincing you, that the Christian Dispensation, as now represented to us in the New Testament, consults the Glory of the divine Perfections, and the Benefit of Mankind more effectually than, so far as appears to us, they could have been consulted, had the Matter of Religion been ordered, as the Persons who make those Objections must upon their own Principles be supposed to desire it should have been. And then,

III. By

III. By shewing, that the Success this Religion hath met with in the World is an unanswerable Proof, that its Doctrines are of God.

I. I shall endeavour to rescue the Christian Religion from some of the Objections brought against it, whether by *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

1. I shall answer the Objections of the *Jews*.

But that I may render my Arguments against the *Jews* not only as short, but as free from any Exception as I can; I shall set out with stating the Points in Controversy; that so it may appear in what both Sides agree, and wherein they differ from us.

1. It is acknowledged by both, that the *Messiah* or *Christ* was ordained by God to come into the World, and promised as a Blessing, and Redeemer to his People. But there arises a Dispute between us, whether he should appear in worldly Grandeur, or whether he should be afflicted and put to Death by his Enemies.

2. It is likewise agreed by both, that *Jesus* did live, and preach in *Judea* and *Galilee*, and die at *Jerusalem*, as the Christians affirm. And here the Point to be debated, is, whether that *Jesus* be the *Christ*.

Now if it can be made out, that *Christ* at his coming was to suffer Injuries and Death for the Sins of others, and that our *Jesus* is the *Christ*, from Topics which the *Jews* ought to admit for sufficient Evidence in a Case of this Nature, it will then follow, that the Doctrine of *Christ crucified*, ought not in Reason to be any longer a *stumbling Block* to the *Jews*.

But what Evidence shall that be, which the *Jews* ought to esteem sufficient? In this we will come down to their own Terms; and ask no more, than that they would think fit to proceed upon the same Motives of Assent, in the Particulars wherein we still differ, which it is plain they do, in those wherein

where
what
N
that i
fect;
mises
work
which
mony
dictio
alread
the Bo
been
they b
Proph
that th
sions o
cion of
this T
of God
mises
they ha
ses wer
be full
Ask
a Perso
before
Histori
speak
I thi
low eit
My
vantage
ledged
toward
Matter
1. V
reveal'd
Vol.

wherein we are already agreed. Let us examine what these are.

Now to any that should ask a *Reason of the Hope that is in the Jews*, the Answer would be to this Effect; That they are warranted to do so by the Promises of God delivered by all the Prophets, who worked Miracles, and foretold several Events, which none but God could do, or reveal, in Testimony of their Mission. That these were really Predictions of Things future, and not Relations of Facts already done, there is no Reason to doubt, because the Books containing these Things have constantly been esteemed the Writings of those whose Names they bear, and that they were extant long before those Prophecies mentioned were accomplished. And that they have been delivered down thro' all Successions of their Fathers without any reasonable Suspicion of Fraud or Negligence. That the Matter of this Tradition is consistent with itself, and worthy of God to do. And therefore, *Lastly*, that the Promises of a Messiah, being a part of this Tradition, they have all possible Assurance, that those Promises were of God's making, and consequently shall be fully performed.

Ask them again, why they believe there was such a Person as *Jesus*, who lived and died, as was said before; they will answer, that their own and other Histories written by Persons in or near those Times, speak of it as a Thing not to be called in Question.

I think no *Jew* of any Understanding can disallow either of these Replies.

My next Step now shall be to observe, what Advantages we have gained by these Arguments alledged for their Belief of the Points acknowledged, toward the Proof of those other, which are still Matter of Controversy between us.

1. We do not debate, whether God hath ever reveal'd his Will to Mankind, both believing the

Books of the Old Testament to be a Revelation of his Will.

2. It is confessed by both, that Miracles and Prophecies are a good Evidence of a Person's being sent from God, provided the Doctrines taught by him are worthy of God.

3. It is agreed, that not only they who see and hear such Things, but Men in all Ages may have sufficient Reason to believe, in case they be reported by competent Witnesses, constantly commemorated by, and with a most religious Fidelity delivered down to Posterity : Especially if the Doctrines and Miracles of former Teachers be confirmed by the Testimony of subsequent Teachers, who are able to produce Miracles in Proof of their Commission.

4. Both allow, that sending the Messiah into the World is an arbitrary Act of God's Goodness, consequently, the Promises concerning him, the Benefits to be received by him, and his Character, are Things to be learned only by Revelation.

5. That the Life, Actions, and Death of Jesus are Matters of Fact, for the Truth whereof Men may reasonably depend upon such historical Evidence, as they would think sufficient for other Relations of the like Nature.

Upon these Grounds both *Jews* and *Christians* receive the Old Testament as true and divine. And upon the same Grounds we contend they ought to believe the *New*. Unless they can either shew,

1. That the Doctrines of the New Testament have not the same Testimonies for their Authority being divine, with those of the Old. Or,

2. That the *New* Testament contains some Things so irreconcilable with the *Old*, that no Man who owns the divine Authority of the *Old*, can possibly hold the same of the *New* ; unless he can suppose that God is mutable.

These are the Arguments which in fact the *Jews* alledge. In answer to which, I shall,

I. Testa
which
Old.
II.
the C
prejud
New.
I. T
ment i
Jews a
1. B
and his
of Mos
2. E
Jews c
trines c
ported
Distan
first Re
for the
sles.
1. T
Apostle
Moses.
The
swell a
were m
But the
relate to
those o
what sh
are not
more sti
Confirm
2. T
those of
sith Writ

I. Shew that the Christian Revelation in the New Testament is attested as well as, nay better than that which Jews and Christians receive for true in the *Old*.

II. That there is no such Disagreement between the Contents of these two, as should in Reason prejudice any, who embrace the *Old*, against the *New*.

I. The Christian Revelation in the New Testament is as well attested, nay better than that which Jews and Christians receive for true in the *Old*.

1. Because the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* of *Jesus* and his *Apostles* do not only equal, but exceed those of *Moses* and the *Prophets*.

2. Because whatever Degree of Certainty the *Jews* can pretend to have of the Actions and Doctrines of *Moses* and the *Prophets* being faithfully reported to the Men of this, or any other assignable Distance of Time, from the Age of the Actors and first Relators; the Christians have all that and more, for the Actions and Doctrines of *Jesus* and his *Apostles*.

1. The *Miracles* and *Prophecies* of *Jesus* and his *Apostles* do not only equal, but exceed those of *Moses*.

The *Number* of *Moses* his *Miracles* the *Jews* swell as high as they can; and they tell us they were more than those of the *Prophets* all together. But the *Number* of *Miracles* which the *Evangelists* relate to have been done by *Christ*, do far exceed those of *Moses* and all the *Prophets* too. And what shall be said then to those many more, which are not there related? And what to the infinitely more still, done by his *Apostles* and *Disciples* in Confirmation of the Doctrine he taught?

2. The Excellence of *Moses* his *Miracles*, above those of any other Prophet, is pretended by the *Jewish* Writers to consist in three Particulars. 1. The

vast Extent of that Power by which he acted. 2. *The public Manner of their being done.* 3. *The authoritative Way of exerting that Power.*

1. *Moses*, say they, had all Sorts of Creatures at his Command: The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Winds, Rivers and Seas, Rocks and Plants, and Brutes, and Men, obeyed him. See *Exod.* vii. viii. ix. x. xiv. xvi. xvii. xxxiii. nay even Heaven itself, being attested to by celestial Bodies, by Visions of Angels, by wonderful Manifestations of the divine Presence, and Conversation with God at Pleasure.

But notwithstanding this, we cannot but esteem him inferior to Jesus. For in him we behold natural Defects supplied. *John* ix. 6. accidental Infirmities (*John* v.) repaired; Diseases cured; the Winds and Seas calmed; the Malice of Men aw'd; the Rage of Devils subdued; the Dead restored to Life, with only a Touch, or a Word speaking; and that sometimes at a Distance.

Moses his Miracles were occasioned by sudden Emergencies, and soon disappeared.

But here Diseases were cured without Relapse, the Blind, the Lame, the Deaf and Dumb, enjoyed their Senses and Limbs in their Perfections, and continued so many standing Instances of our Lord's infinite Power to the last Hour of their Lives.

And not only of his *Power*, but his *Goodness*; for whereas the greater Part of *Moses* his Works were full of Terror, and so many Executions of exemplary Justice, and uncommon Vengeance; our Lord's all conduced to the Comfort and Advantage of Mankind, and were Works of Gentleness and Pity, of Benevolence and Love. In a Word, as our blessed Lord proved his Power to be infinite, so he never exerted it without as visible a Demonstration of Mercy.

If God's special Providence preserved *Moses* when

when
raab;
withou
Nebo:
him;
fabulou
him at
those a
The
But did
they di
an Ang
celebra
from H
after hi
the Wi
ny. T
and for
Aga
ting G
from th
were, a
Charact
Let
our's Bi
Sages.
with w
mitted
Holy Gl
and ligh
claring,
pleased,
If M
Face to
the etern
dwelt be
the Ang
Moses,
when

when he was first born, from the Cruelty of *Pharaoh*; in giving him an Old Age (*Deut. xxxiv. 7.*) without Infirmary; and at last buried him in Mount *Nebo*: If he punished those who rebelled against him; and if besides these, we should admit the fabulous Honours invented by the *Jews*, as done to him at his Death, yet they are not to be named with those actually and notoriously done to *Jesus*.

They tell us of Visions, and Guards of Angels: But did those heavenly Spirits ever attend *Moses* as they did Christ? His Incarnation was foretold by an Angel. His Birth was published by one, and celebrated by a Quire of them. He was preserved from *Herod* by an Angel's appearing to *Joseph*. And after his Temptation, Angels ministered unto him in the Wilderness; and strengthened him in his Agony. They testify'd his Resurrection and Ascension; and foretold his Return from thence in Glory.

Again: If the Descent of a bright Cloud, denoting God's special Presence, if the Oracles delivered from thence, and the free Access of *Moses* to God were, as indeed they were, great Additions to his Character:

Let our Adversaries remember, that at our Saviour's Birth, a new Star pointed him out to the eastern Sages. At his Baptism we have another Miracle, with which no Testimony given *Moses* can be admitted to a Comparison; *The Heavens opened, the Holy Ghost descended in bodily Shape, like a Dove, and lighting upon him, and a Voice from Heaven declaring, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

If *Moses* had Access to God, and talked with him Face to Face, how far is that short of him, in whom the eternal Word, and all the Fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily? Especially if I might here add, that the Angel of God's Presence which appeared to *Moses*, was no more than that very Word of God in

an angelical Form. And if *Jesus* be as I shall prove the *Messiah*, then did *Moses* at his highest Glory, adore that very Person, whom a blind Zeal labours to set him now above.

Again: I cannot think *Moses* his Death and Burial, no not tho' all the Legends of the Rabbies concerning it were true, worthy to be once mentioned with the amazing Appearances confessed to have attended the Death of *Jesus*, see *Matt. xxvii.* but above all, with his triumphant Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascent to the right Hand of God. And lastly, with those Proofs of his being invested with a heavenly Kingdom in the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which none could so plentifully have shed abroad, less than he, to whom all Power is given in Heaven and Earth.

2. A second Pre-eminence attributed to the Miracles of *Moses* above any other Prophet, is their being so publickly done. Some in the Presence of the Congregation of *Israel*; others in the Presence of *Pharaoh* and his Officers.

And were those of our Saviour done in a Corner? Did he not work his Miracles in Streets, Villages, in Cities, at Times and Places of most public Converse; at *Jerusalem* on Sabbath Days, at the Passover: And in the Presence of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who had Malice and Judgment enough to have detected him, had he been an Impostor? And was not his Resurrection manifested to the Senses of above 500 at once?

But in no Respect does this Comparison appear with greater Lustre and Advantage, than when the Power which wrought these Miracles, and the Authority expressed in them, is made the Measure of our Judgment in the Case.

Moses performed most, if not all his Miracles, either by express Command from God, see *Exod. iv. 3. 4. 6. 7. vii. 9. 19. 20.* or upon particular

Application to him. See *Exod.* viii. 9. 12. 29. 30. Nor have we Reason to conclude, that this Power was not, in his Case also, imparted by God, as proper Occasions called for the Exercise of it, and withdrawn again, as those Occasions ceased.

Whereas our Lord, on the contrary, is observed to proceed with all the Marks of Authority, such as argued a Fulness of Power inherent in himself, as *Receive thy Sight, and immediately the Blind saw.*

But that which proves that *Jesus* had never any Equal, is the communicating this Power of working Miracles to his Disciples; which is evident from many Places of the New Testament. See *Matt.* x. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Luke* x. 17. *Matt.* xxviii. 18. *Acts* iv. 9, 10, &c.

So upon all these Considerations may we say of the Miracles of *Jesus* and *Moses*, what *St. Paul* says of the two Covenants indented by them, that even *that which was made glorious, hath no Glory in this Respect, by Reason of the Glory that excelleth.*

To elude the Force of these Arguments, some *Jews* (*Vide Justin. Mart. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 296. Jos. Antiq. L. ii. c. 5.*) have ascribed all *Jesus* his Miracles to magical Enchantments, and the Assistance of the Devil.

But they must know, the same was said of *Moses*. And the same Allegations which cleared *Moses* will clear *Jesus*.

Now if by *Magic* be meant such delusory Arts as cheat the Senses with false Appearances of Things, 'tis plain the Miracles of both producing real Effects, must have proceeded from some higher Cause.

Supposing then those Productions to have been real, how will the *Jew* persuade us, that the Miracles of *Moses* were truly divine, while he charges those of *Jannes* and *Jambres* with being Diabolical?

He does it indeed by several substantial Arguments.

ments: *One*, that *Moses* gave undeniable Evidence of a Power superior to theirs. See *Exod.* vii. 11. 12. viii. 18, 19. *Another*, that *Moses* did not only wound, but heal, which the Magicians could not do. *A third*, that *Moses* in his Law forbids all Enchantments, which makes it absurd to suppose such a Law established upon Signs brought to pass by the Assistance of any such Spirits.

And did not *Jesus* act by a Power most evidently superior to that of the Devil, when he dispossessed Men of evil Spirits? Is it in the Inclination of the Devil to do so many Works of Mercy and Goodness? Will a Devil open the Eyes of the Blind, and cure the Infirmities of Mankind?

If therefore *Jesus* by *Beelzebub* did his wondrous Works, by whom did *Moses* and the Prophets do them? Therefore they shall be your Judges.

2. Having asserted to our Saviour the first Mark of Excellence asserted by the *Jews* to *Moses*, which regards the Power by which he acted; I shall next consider their Objection against his Right to the second, the public Manner of his proving it.

And here they insult over what they call his pretended Resurrection, after which his own Apostle confesses him to have been manifested *not to all the People, but to Witnesses chosen before of God*: That is, say they, to Disciples who were already of his own Party. Whereas he ought to have rose in the most public Manner, as *Moses* did his Miracles.

To these Objections I answer,

1. That though a Miracle being done in the Presence of Enemies be a very considerable Circumstance, yet it is not a necessary one for the Proof of it. The *Jews* own this, by assenting as fully to those done in the Wilderness, where none but their Ancestors were present, as to the others done before *Pharaoh*.

2. When *Moses* divided the Red Sea, we can't imagine

imagine six hundred thousand Men saw the Action of the Rod ; but they saw the Effects of it by passing the Sea. And in this Sense not five hundred only, but so many thousand may be said to have had sensible Evidence of our Lord's Resurrection. For every Miracle his Disciples worked in his Name, and by Vertue of that Power he gave them, was a fresh Demonstration that he was risen from the Dead.

3. They who object thus, take upon them to prescribe to God, and lay the Blame of Infidelity at his Door.

Whereas he contents himself with such Methods as are sufficient to persuade, but not necessary to force our Assent. All then we have to do, is to inquire impartially, whether such Proof was made of this Matter, as unprejudiced Persons would think reasonable to be persuaded by. Which has been in part done, and will be more fully shewn hereafter.

4. That, might we presume to assign Reasons for God's Doings, this weighty one appears to us, for *Jesus* being manifested to some select Witnesses, rather than to all the People ; that this was admirably well contrived to check that prevailing Error of Christ's earthly Kingdom, and so prevent the Disorders which might probably have grown from his appearing alive again to all without Distinction.

For if upon his feeding five thousand, the Multitude were so eager upon making him a King, what Bounds could have restrained their intemperate Zeal, had they *eat and drank with him* as the *Apostles* did *after* his Resurrection? So prudent may even we perceive this Conduct to be, which provided Witnesses above any just Exception, and before had prepared the *Jews* for the Testimony, they were about to give by the known Instances of *Jairus* his Daughter, the *Widow's Son* of *Nain*, and that of *Lazarus*.

The

The *Jews* then ought not to complain for want of Evidence ; especially since the Quality of the Proof is not the Rule they go by in this Matter : For they believe as strange Things upon weaker Testimony.

5. They doubt not of *Elijah's* being taken up into Heaven upon the single Witness of *Elisha*. Nay they believe that foolish Tale of Christ's Body being stolen away by his Disciples, though the Guards who told them so were asleep.

3. As frivolous is that Objection, *thirdly*, against the last Mark of Excellence, which the *Jews* claim for *Moses*, but refuse to *Jesus*: *The authoritative Way of proceeding in his Miracles.*

For, say they, " Did not *Jesus* too pray to his " Father in one of his last and most celebrated " Miracles? Nor did *Lazarus* come forth, 'till " after such Application first made to God."

But his Prayer was not in a Form of Supplication, but Thanksgiving. *Father*, said he, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me* ; whereas before *Elijah* raised to Life the Widow's Son, he stretched himself three times upon the Child, and cried, *O Lord, my God, I pray thee, let this Child's Soul come into him again.* And *Moses* upon great Exigences used to fall upon his Face, and cry and complain to God. But our Lord offered no Petition, and intimated no Weakness, for he declared to his Disciples what he was about to do. *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of his Sleep.*

Again : *Jesus* pray'd ; but it was because the People that stood by, might know that God had sent him, *John xi. 42.* and not upon his own Account.

4. They say, that *Jesus* his Miracles were never acknowledged by the *Jews* ; the Falseness of which I will shew. And,

1. We find not only his Miracles, but even his Doctrine, upon their Account believed by many of them

them before his Death. And afterwards we read of thousands that were converted,

2. It is one Thing to believe the Truth of Miracles, and another to believe all that which those Miracles were intended to confirm. Many of the chief Rulers believed Christ's Miracles and Doctrine both, but their worldly Considerations restrained them from an open Profession of it: The very Belief of his Miracles, and the Apprehension of that Influence they were like to have upon the People, determined the *Pharisees* to put him to Death.

3. As the Miracles of the Messiah were foretold, so it was likewise, that it should not be believed. *Iſa. xxxv. 6. liii. lxv. 2.* So that instead of the *Jews* concluding against *Jesus*, because he was rejected by the generality of that Nation, he could not have been the promised Messiah, had he at his first coming been universally received as such. And so this Objection is perfectly void.

And if our Saviour's Miracles exceeded *Moses's*, so did those of the Apostles every one of the Prophets, not excepting *Moses* himself, in every one of the Respects beforementioned. And all these Things contribute to the Honour of *Jesus*, yet more, because they were done in his Name. *Acts iii. 6.* Whereas we do not find any Prophets pretending to receive such Gifts from *Moses*.

Having considered the Miracles, I come now to compare the *Prophecies* of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, with *Jesus* and his *Apostles*.

By *Prophecies* are agreed to be meant Predictions of Events, as none but Persons inspired by God can foretel.

Of these many occur in the Old Testament, see *Gen. xlix. 1, &c. Deut. xxxiii. xxviii. xxx. xxxii.* besides those numerous Predictions that relate to the *Messiah*.

And to what but the same Spirit, who spake by
the

the Prophets, can we ascribe those of *Jesus*, concerning his Death, and the Circumstances attending it, his Resurrection, the sending of the Holy Ghost, and the miraculous Effects of it? Who but God could foretel the Swiftneſs of the Progreſs of Chriſtianity; the ariſing of falſe Chriſts, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the miſerable Diſperſion of the *Jews*? Laſtly, Who but he, who we *believe ſhall come to be our Judge*, could represent the proceeding of the Day of Judgment, and the Condition of good and bad Men in the next World? Which we have Reason to conclude ſhall be, from the fulfilling of the reſt of his Predictions.

The like may be ſaid of the *Predictions* in the *Apoſtles* Writings, ſee 2 *Tim.* iv. 2 *Theſ.* ii. *Rom.* ix. xi. 2 *Tim.* iii. particularly the Manner of Chriſt's ſecond coming, the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Rewards and Punishments of another State. Theſe Judgments of God are farther above out of human Sight, are of greater Importance, and more clearly imparted, than any, (thoſe concerning the Meſſiah excepted) which were delivered by *Moses* and the *Prophets*.

And tho' *Moses* excell'd all the Prophets in his familiar Intercourſe with God, yet even his Pre-eminence muſt not be brought into Competition with his incommunicable Prerogative, who *is in the Boſom of the Father, to whom the Father giveth not the Spirit by Meaſure*.

Having ſhewn that the Chriſtian Revelation is as well attested, nay better than that which the *Jews* and *Chriſtians* receive for true in the *Old Teſtament*. Becauſe the *Miracles* and *Prophecies* of *Jesus* and his *Apoſtles*, do not only equal, but exceed thoſe of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. I proceed now,

II. To ſhew, that whatever Degree of Certainty the *Jews* can pretend to have of the Actions and Doctrines of *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, being faithfully

fully r
signab
Actor
that,
Jesus
Th

1.

2.

As

they h
Auth
Book
and t

now

by P

leaſt

matu

Jew

N

feſſe

Jew

on i

the

the

T

mon

the

Rel

reco

poſe

Th

Mi

ſide

bia

cou

his

Fa

Ch

fully reported to the Men of this, or any other assignable Distance of Time, from the Age of the Actors, and first Relators; the Christians have all that, and more, for the Actions and Doctrines of Jesus and his Apostles.

This Argument consists of two Parts.

1. *The Credit of the Reporters.*
2. *The Fidelity of the Conveyance.*

As to the *former*, the *Jews* say very truly, that they have all the Reason in the World to rest in the Authority of the Old Testament; for most of the Books were written by those whose Names they bear, and though the Composers of some of them be not now precisely known, yet they were either written by Persons endued with a prophetic Spirit, or, at least examined and approved by such, and upon mature Deliberation received into the Canon of the *Jewish* Writers.

Now since the Sum of the *Jewish* Religion is confessed to lie in the five Books of *Moses*, and since the *Jews* do not pretend that any part of their Revelation is more clearly attested, I shall ballance these in the Old against the Writings of the *Evangelists* in the New Testament.

Taking it then for granted, that the Books commonly attributed to *Moses* are his; we readily allow the *Jews* have abundant Reason to depend upon his Relation; for such an Account of Things, as are recorded in his Books, could never be imposed upon a whole Nation, without it was true. They received his Law upon the Authority of his Miracles, which they were Eye-witnesses of. Besides there appear in *Moses* all the Marks of an unbiassed Historian. He was not partial in his Accounts of Things. He mentions the Failings of his Family. Nor does he go about to hide his own Faults. He does not consult the Greatness of his Children, but gives the Priesthood to *Aaron*, and vests

vests the Magistracy in another Tribe. *Numb. xiii. 8.*

In a Word, that what he did was true, we have this further Confirmation of, because they were afterwards attested to by several others, who give sufficient Evidence of their being assisted and directed by God also, in the like extraordinary Manner.

Now all this is to be said for the Evangelists too. They wrote in a Country, where the Things they relate, were done; at a Time when they were fresh in every ones Memory; among Persons desirous and capable of detecting any Falshood: They conceal'd not their Master's obscure Birth and Life, nor the Reproaches and Poverty he endured, nor the Infamy of his Death, nor the Terrors of his Mind upon the Approach of it; they did not dissemble their own Meanness, and illiterate Education; nor their want of Faith, nor their Ambition, nor Cowardice. They related the Life of one whom they conversed with. They neither sought nor could get any temporal Advantage by it. They were serious and honest Men, and taught that Lying was a damnable Sin. In short, their Circumstances were such, that they could lie under no Temptation to deceive others, or could be deceived themselves: And if the *Jews* allow, as they do, that the Testimony of a succeeding Prophet is a good Confirmation of a preceding one, then are the Miracles and Doctrines of *Jesus* above all Exception; because they were strengthened by the like miraculous Demonstrations of a divine Spirit, in every one of the Persons who have recorded them for our Belief.

Thus far the Arguments for believing each of these Reports, are at least sufficient to render any Man's Infidelity past all Excuse; and those, by which the Christian Revelation is supported, equal in every Respect to the *Jewish*.

But supposing Men inclined to cavil, (as God

knows

knows
ther of
answer

1. Doctri
what
none,
lief;
to him
if not
deed h
he wr
that e
tho' b
when
told b
to serv
will b
vour,
would

2. from
Moses
The I
of W
ble of
been

3. port
same
Cause
of his
lists
gans,
the F

4. Grea
to th

knows they are too much) let us now enquire whether of these two Reports is the better qualified to answer, or put to silence such Gain-sayers.

1. It makes some Difference that the Actions and Doctrines of *Moses* were wrote by himself, whereas what *Jesus* did, was wrote by others: Not that none, who testify of themselves are worthy of Belief; but, that the World thinks a Man so partial to himself, that his own Word will go a little Way, if not back'd by some other Evidence. *Moses* indeed had other Evidence, which was the Miracles he wrote; and so had our Saviour the same: So that either of them had a Right to our Obedience, tho' both had testify'd of themselves. But still when the Facts tending to a Person's Honour are told by second Hands, and such as have no Interest to serve, by the Relations given of them: These will be supposed less partial in another Man's Favour, than jealous People may think the Man would have been to himself.

2. Another remarkable Difference here arises from the different Qualifications of these Writers. *Moses* had the Advantages of a learned Education. The Evangelists were plain, artless Men. Masters of Wisdom may persuade; but they were not capable of putting what they say together, if it had not been true.

3. It makes much for the Credibility of any Report to have it attested by other Historians of the same Age, especially if they were Enemies to the Cause. This Advantage *Moses* has not, by reason of his Antiquity; but the Writings of the Evangelists are attested both by *Christians*, *Jews*, and *Pagans*, who say enough of *Jesus* to convince us, that the Fame of his Miracles were notorious.

4. We are all apt to be credulous in favour of Greatness, and Persons who have been Benefactors to the Public. Now this was the Case of the *Israelites*,

raelites, with Regard to *Moses*. He had rescued them from Slavery, and supported them forty Years in a barren Wilderness by Bread from Heaven; so that he was not only an excellent Governour, but under God their only Deliverer. Whereas *Jesus* never conferred any temporal Benefit, that might gain upon the Hearts of the *Jews*, but was despised and persecuted by the Magistrates. So that whatever glorious Things should be said of such a one, the Persons to whom they were said were in no Preparation to receive them, but had the strongest Prejudices to overcome.

5. The same may be said with Regard to the Design of these Reports, or that Faith, and those Precepts which were enforced upon the Credit of them.

The Law of *Moses* abounded with painful Ordinances, such as the *Jews* would not hastily submit to, without substantial Proofs of its Divinity. But yet that Law had this Consideration to recommend it, which the Gospel had not; that it indented for temporal Rewards of Obedience, whereas the Gospel covenanted for a spiritual and future Recompence.

Moses wrote, and *Israel* believed, when there was no Danger in it. But the Evangelists wrote, and the first Christians believed, at the Hazard of their Lives. And therefore nothing could prevail for the Publication and Reception of such Doctrines, but the clearest Evidence of Truth and Duty.

Allowing then, as the Matter in Fact is, that the Relation given by *Moses*, and that by the *Evangelists*, are both worthy of all Men to be received; yet the Christians have stronger Inducements to believe, that the Doctrines and Actions of *Jesus* and his *Apostles* are faithfully reported, than any the *Jews* have for those of *Moses* and the Prophets.

Thus much may suffice for the Comparison between

tween
Those
Man
a Wit
I say,
rages
belong
with M

If
some
on, le
again
into th
Object
of Fai
good
plain
and w
compe
fore,
what
Spirit.
the C
Streng
Case is
contain
vangel

1.
some
cles of
And,

2.
probati
depend
not the

And
and th
spoke,
Vou

tween the Writings of *Moses* and the *Evangelists*. Those of *St. Paul*, considering the extraordinary Manner of his Conversion, render him as credible a Witness as any of the Apostles. And for the rest, I say, they will be found to have the same Advantages over the *Prophets*, which have been proved to belong to the *Evangelists*, when set in Competition with *Moses*.

If the *Jews* object that we pay a Deference to some Books, whose Authors are not perfectly agreed on, let them try what Force this Argument is of against the Books of *Samuel*, and the rest admitted into their own Canon, notwithstanding the same Objection : Whether the Agreement with the Rule of Faith, and the Usefulness of the Pieces, be not as good a Defence for us as them : Whether it be not plain that these were written in the Apostles Days, and whether they who were inspired, were not as competent Judges as any of their Prophets heretofore, what ought to be rejected as spurious, and what received as composed by the Dictates of God's Spirit. If this were not done immediately it shews the Caution wherewith they proceeded, and adds Strength to the Cause. The *Jews* indeed say our Case is different from theirs, because their Faith is all contained in *Moses*, whereas ours is not so in the *Evangelists*. But,

1. This is what all Christians do not allow ; some say that the Epistles only explain some Articles of Faith hinted at in the Gospels, but add none. And,

2. Allowing the Objection, the Apostles Approbation is sufficient ; the Authority of the Books depending upon our knowing them to be inspired, not their particular Authors.

Another Objection of the *Jews* is, That *Moses* and the Prophets declare by what Authority they spoke, as *Thus saith the Lord* ; whereas the *Evangelists*

gelists making Use of no such Forms leave Room for Suspicion, that they neither had, nor durst challenge the like Authority. But this is easily removed by attending only to the difference of Style which must be accommodated to the Subject Matter treated of at different Times. For *Moses*, when his Writings are purely historical, contents himself with a plain Relation of Facts : And in like Manner act the *Evangelists*. But if the particular Messages of God, delivered to the People by *Moses* and the *Prophets*, are prefaced with a *Thus saith the Lord* ; the Decrees of the Apostles are likewise enforced with an *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost and to us*. Acts xv. 28. And the greater Part of their Epistles begin with a solemn Declaration of the Writers Character : So that this Exception is either the Effect of Ignorance or Inconsideration.

Having shewn the Credibility of those Reports made concerning *Moses* and the *Prophets* on the one hand, and *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles on the other ; I hope, I have proved thus far at least, that there appears no Reason, Why *they who receive the Jewish, should upon their own Principles reject the Christian Revelation*, unless they can shew,

2. The Conveyance of the *Christian Revelation* down to the present Age to be unfaithful.

But I hope to make it appear that the *Christian Faith* wants not the Support of a Tradition to following Ages, preferable to the *Jewish*.

The Pre-eminence of their Tradition above the rest of the World, and above Christianity in particular, the *Jews* challenge to themselves upon two Accounts,

1. In regard this Tradition of theirs hath always passed from Father to Son, continued down in the same Stock and Communion, where both Affection and Duty would engage each Generation to instruct their Posterity in all necessary Truths.

2. That,

2. That, as their Law hath solemnly enjoined the teaching these Things to their Children, so they have in Fact taken better Care for preserving the Oracles of God, than the *Christians* ever did. But in answer to these, I will shew,

1. That a Tradition in Matters of Religion is not the less, but rather the more credible for being not confined to one single Stock or Nation.

2. That the Methods made Use of for preserving the Records of the New Testament, have given us a greater Certainty of their being pure, than those which have convey'd to us the Records of the *Jewish* Faith in the Old Testament.

1. A Tradition in religious Matters is in no Degree the less, but rather the more credible for being not confined to the People of one and the same Nation.

How Tradition comes to be of Weight so great, as both Parties own it to be, may thus be understood: *That* all Truths being not capable of the same Sort of Proof, the Sort of Proof proper to Matters of Fact, for which ourselves have not the Evidence of Sense, is the Testimony of those who had: *That* this Testimony is then good, when born by Witnesses, who lie under no just Suspicion of being deceived, or intending to deceive us: *That* this Suspicion is not just, when they relate Matters of which they are competent Judges; especially if such, as Men would naturally be inquisitive about, and not receive or propagate but upon the clearest Conviction of their Truth, and that they were in Duty bound to do so. Now that all these Marks of Truth belong to the *Christian* Tradition, hath already been proved: And such a Tradition must be stronger still, in Proportion to the Numbers and Condition of the Persons persuaded by it; and to the Dispersion of those Records wherein it is contained, at such Times, to such Places, and after such a

Manner as render any Collusion or material Corruption impossible: Since any such Attempts could not be concealed, or connived at: All which Circumstances receive their utmost Confirmation, if Length of Time, and the Malice of Adversaries, have been so far from shaking Mens Belief of these Things, that *after Ages* have as nicely examined them, believed them, and do esteem themselves under Obligations as indispensable to deliver them to Posterity, as any of their Predecessors did.

Now any one who rightly discerns the Force of this Gradation, may see that the true Strefs of Tradition lies in an Appeal to the common Sense of Mankind: That it is a Reliance upon the Testimony of Men considered as Men, and not as Persons of this or that People or Persuasion; actuated by Principles implanted in that Nature, which the whole Species partake of, and not influenced by the Power of such as are peculiar to any particular Community or Religion. Upon these Terms the *Christian* Tradition is more credible than the *Jewish*.

If this Testimony of Men be indeed of the greatest Weight, that *People in their right Senses will neither suffer themselves to be deceived, nor deceive others, when it is against their Interest to do either*; then to oppose ourselves against a general Consent in such a Case, is to arraign all Men of Madness.

But yet the more general the Consent, the stronger the Inducement must be. And therefore the *Jewish*, though a reasonable Motive of Belief, is yet as much inferior to the Christian Tradition, as the Testimony of one Nation, separated from the World by civil and religious Notes of Distinction, where the same united Interest might leave more Room for suspecting some Combination among their Rulers; or where a national Corruption of Manners might obscure the Truth, is less unexceptionable than the unanimous Concurrence of all Nations

tions between whom there is little or no Correspondence; but none such possible, as could produce a Conspiracy at once to change those Records, the Purity and Preservation whereof all of them agree to be a Matter of the highest Consequence, tho' they agree in scarce any thing else.

Hence we may see the Weakness of that Argument which narrows the Foundation of Faith, by laying it upon the Tradition of Men's Fathers, considered not as *Men*, but as *Fathers*. For by resolving all into this, that very thing is supposed, which ought to be proved. The Sufficiency, I mean, of that Evidence, which first gave Birth to such Tradition. It is alledged indeed, that Fathers cannot be supposed to deceive their Children in Religion, where their Salvation is concerned; but this may be alledged by all other Parents, as well as *Jewish*; and would, if universally received, render it impossible for any one to be drawn off from the Principles which his Ancestors had infused into him, though ever so foreign to Truth. Again, allowing Affection strongly to dispose Fathers for educating their Children in the right Way, yet is there not an evident Necessity of allowing withal, that filial Affection will likewise dispose Children to take any Impressions with a partial Easiness? And thus it is very possible for Truth to lose this Way, as much as it gains the other. That therefore the *Jewish* Scriptures so often remit that People to *their Fathers* for Instruction, was because those *Paths* they walked in were right; but if any other Men had taught the same Truths upon the same Evidence, the *Jews* had been in Duty bound to hear them. And for this Reason, because it is repugnant to all our natural Notices of God, for any thing but Truth to be so confirmed, as the *Mosaic* Dispensation was; and contrary to the first Principles of Nature to submit to, and impose upon others, unprofitable and unpleasant Falshoods. Ff 3 When

When therefore this is laid before Men, I cannot but suppose every unprejudiced Person will grant that it is greatly for the Advantage of any Tradition to be disseminated in all Parts of the World, especially if it impose Rules of strict Living; more if it oblige Men, not only to super-add, but abandon an old Faith and Worship: More still if the old were less troublesome, and the new severe. And most of all if these Severities are to be exercised in Prospect of a spiritual and distant Recompence, but at the Expence of present Sufferings; such as thousands of sober Persons have not only sustained patiently, but ever chosen as a Testimony to the Truth. I say, such a Tradition as this, hated and persecuted every where, and yet come to be received every where, must be allowed to carry clearer Marks of Truth, than one confined to a singly Country, and pretended to stand upon no firmer Ground, than the constant Belief of our own Ancestors.

But, to come nearer to the *Jews* own Principle, If the Tradition of their Fathers, as such, be so exceeding venerable, why must those Fathers be neglected, who actually imbraced the Christian Faith? Why should their Authority be so sacred, who deny our Lord's Resurrection upon the senseless Lie of a few bribed Soldiers; and theirs be of no Account who have assented to the Truth upon the powerful Arguments which I mentioned before? No Reason can be assigned, but that those Unbelievers agree in Opinion with these Successors who urge that Authority in their own Defence. And this is in Effect no Reason at all, since every one who believes rationally, does it upon such Grounds, as they who do not yet ought to believe upon.

This may suffice to shew, that a Tradition in Matters of Religion is not the less, but rather the more credible for being diffused thro' many, and not confined to one Kindred or Country.

All which will appear more fully, by,

II. Examining, whether the *Methods* taken for preserving and transmitting down the *Records of the Christian Faith* in particular, do not afford us equal, nay greater Assurance of their Purity, than those used for conveying to us the *Records of the Jewish*.

I. One Difference to our Advantage may be taken from the Language in which the *Jewish* and *Christian* Revelations were originally written. The former in one, whose Text must needs, for want of determinate Vowels, be subject to much ambiguity.

But the Doctrines of the New Testament were contrived to be as universally intelligible, and as speedily as possible. The Apostles were endued with a Gift of Tongues, to qualify them to convert all Nations. What they taught, was soon committed to Writing in a Language, which all the learned World were at that Time acquainted with : And Copies were in a short Time dispersed over the World, which could not be liable to the same Hazards, by means of sudden Revolutions and public Calamities, as if confined to one Country only. For those Calamities could not happen every where at once ; nor could a general Corruption of Manners, a Spirit of Superstition, the Example, or the Seducements of a wicked Ruler, prevail over many Nations, as we may suppose them to do in one. For notwithstanding the many Difficulties the Christian Religion has laboured under in some Parts of the World, yet it hath then flourished elsewhere.

But the *Law of Moses* in the Reign of *Josiah*, after it had lain long neglected, was found in the Rubbish of the Temple : Whereas such an Instance as this is so far from being parallel'd in the Case of the Christian Revelation, that no Book has been so generally known and so wide and far dispersed, and therefore cannot be capable of being so near lost.

The great Exactness boasted of by the *Jews* in their Scriptures, and the Supply of vowel Points for rendering them more easy and intelligible, are of too fresh a Date to be brought in Competition with the Evidence for the Christian Cause.

2. Another Advantage which the Christian Tradition hath above the Jewish, arises from the many Translations of the Records it conveys to us, into the vulgar Tongues of those Countries, where the Gospel was preached.

3. Even the Heresies which God was pleased to permit in the primitive Church, were a very considerable Advantage to the Purity of that Tradition, by which we hold the Christian Oracles at this Day. For these threatening Innovations to serve a Party, put the Orthodox upon a more nice Examination of Copies, as they came abroad.

Accordingly the Evidence we have of any Changes or Interpolations made in favour of any separate Interest or Opinion, is not greater than that of their being detected and confuted. And as for the various Readings, they are equally common to the *Jewish* Scriptures. And in ours, either do not at all disturb the Sense; or not in any Points essential to Religion; or if so, yet leave abundant Proof for those very Points from other Places, where no such Disagreement of Readings can be objected.

4. As the Truth of the Jewish Tradition is unquestionably attested to by several Rites, and solemn Acts of Religion, such as *Circumcision*, and the *Feast of the Passover*, the Commencement of which cannot be accounted for upon a Supposal, that the Things commemorated by them had never been at all. So the baptizing of Christians, and their receiving the Elements of Bread and Wine, could never have obtained in the World, had there not been a just Foundation for them in the Commands, by which those Sacraments were instituted; in the

Acknow-

Acknowledgment of their Necessity and Efficacy, and the Sense of those Benefits actually conferred.

5. The *Jews* say, that *Truth must needs be with them, and not with us*, because we allow the Divinity of their Revelation, and they reject ours.

To which I answer, that though the Christian Dispensation do suppose and prove the *Jewish* to be divine, because subsequent to, and grafted upon it; yet the *Jew* gets nothing by this, if the Evidence of a divine Authority for the latter, shall be found to equal, or exceed that given for the former. And if the Miracles of Jesus and his Apostles be Testimonies of a divine Mission superior to those of *Moses* and the Prophets; if the Certainty that Christians have of these being faithfully reported and transmitted to the present Age, be at least equal to that of the *Jews*, for the Records of their Religion (as I hope I have proved) then is my first Argument made good; that *with Regard to the external Evidence given to both, the Jews, who receive the Old Testament as divine, ought upon their own Principles to receive the New as such.*

I proceed now to shew,

II. That there is no such Disagreement between the Contents of these two, as should in Reason prejudice any, who embrace the *Old*, against the *New*.

Now taking the *Jewish* Scriptures as they are commonly distinguished into the *Law* and the *Prophecies*, we Christians are accused of perverting both.

The one, by assuming to ourselves an undue Exemption from the *Law* of *Moses*.

The other, by misapplying and misinterpreting the *Prophecies*.

In order to prove, that we have assumed to ourselves an undue Exemption from the *Law* of *Moses*, the *Jews* contend,

1. That the Messiah should not, could not, and that

that our Jesus did not raise the moral Law to any higher Perfection than *Moses* left it.

2. That their ritual Worship is in that Respect more acceptable to God, than our spiritual Worship.

3. That the Ceremonial Law was not given as a Mark of Distinction for that People, so as to be typical or temporary, but was sufficient for the Salvation of Sinners.

4. That God did not intend that Institution should cease.

5. That Examples of Jesus and his Apostles, and first Converts to the Christian Faith, who observed the Law of *Moses*, are inconsistent with the Christian Doctrine, concerning the Expiration of the *Levitical* Law.

6. They produce some Prophecies of *Moses*, and others, signifying, that they shall certainly be gathered from their present Dispersion, and shall keep the Law in their own Land; from whence they suppose, that this Law is still in full Force, and shall continue so to the End of the World.

All which Assertions I will answer in Order.
And

1. I will shew, that the Messiah was to exalt, and accordingly *Jesus* did exalt the moral Law, and leave it more perfect than he found it.

That this was part of the Messiah's Business, some have inferred from that Text of *Deuteronomy* applied by St. *Peter* to Christ. *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me, him shall ye hear.* Now the Character of a Lawgiver is a Resemblance to *Moses*, which none of the Prophets could claim. But he, who came to propose a new Covenant, acted by an Authority equal to that of *Moses* in his legislative Capacity, and so renders that Threatening very proper of the People being bound to hear him, upon Penalty of Destruction. The

same is yet more clearly foretold by *Micah*, in those Words confessed on all Hands to respect the *Messiah*, that then *the Law should go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* Ch. iv. 2.

That this was likewise the general Expectation of the *Jews*, may be probably inferred from the Discourse which passed between our Saviour and the Woman of *Samaria*. See *John* iv. 23, 24, 25. and from their Gloss upon the first Words of *Ecclesiastes*, *All is Vanity*. That is, say they, *all that Law, which we have been taught in the present State of Things, is Vanity, in Comparison of the Law of the Messiah.*

That Jesus did exalt the moral Law, I thus prove. The constituent Parts of a Law are the *Precept* and the *Sanction*; and one Law may excel another in either, or both of these Respects. In respect of the *former*, a Law that is clear and express, is more perfect than one dark and involved in general Terms. It follows again, that a Law is more or less perfect in respect of the *latter*, according to the Encouragement it propounds, or the Penalty it binds by. Since then the Moral-Law under the Gospel-State hath explained Mens Duty more fully; since it has cut off all Evasions from pretended Ignorance; since the Gospel does not only direct Men in their Obedience, but assist them in the Performance, by Supplies of Grace which the Law of *Moses* could not confer; since this engages our Diligence by express Promises of eternal Life, which that Law did not any where positively covenant for, but only for temporal Blessings; since this restrains the Sinner by Threatenings of eternal Vengeance, and the Law denounced only temporal Sufferings; since the Gospel-Compensation is an Over-balance for all we can do, or endure, to attain it; and the Gospel Penalty such, as no Pleasure can make amends for incurring, which the Law

Law does not ; the moral Law is then exalted by Jesus and his Doctrine.

It is, I know, objected by some, that the *Jews* in general have all along believed and acted in Expectation of Rewards and Punishments in a future State, which I grant ; but deny that they had these Expectations from the Law of *Moses*. How they came by them I will enquire hereafter : In the mean Time,

2. I will shew, that *an inward and spiritual Worship is better, and more acceptable to God, than an outward and ceremonial.*

By the *former* I understand such Acts of Piety and Purity, of Justice and Charity, as flow from a Principle of Religion.

By the *latter*, such religious Performances as Sacrifices, Distinction of Days and Meats, and such other visible Actions.

And here I take it for granted, that both Parties agree, that the *latter*, when destitute of the *former*, will not recommend us to God.

The Question then is, which of the two is most agreeable to God ; and if the Spiritual stand in need of the Ceremonial, to render it acceptable.

The *Jews* assert the Ceremonial to be preferable, “ as Acts of pure Obedience, the Grounds where-
“ of, the less able we are to account for, the more
“ Honour we do to God by resigning our Reason
“ to his Appointment.

“ That this external Worship includes the in-
“ ward, and is its proper Perfection, and so more
“ acceptable than the other can be without it.

“ That God has shewed a Regard to this, by
“ requiring Sacrifices from the Beginning of the
“ World.

“ Nay, he has given the Preference to this, by
“ punishing the Neglect of Ordinances with a more
“ exemplary Justice, than some Actions of the
“ greatest Turpitude.

“ That

“ That the *Israelites* are said by these Ordinances to be sanctified. And,

“ That this is very consonant to the Christian Principles ; who retaining but two Things of this Nature, Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, hold these to be the most exalted Parts of their Religion.” These are Objections that deserve to be considered, and I therefore reply to each distinctly.

1. We allow that the ceremonial Part of the Law has nothing to recommend it to us, but the Command of God. But this is greatly to the Advantage of moral Duties that they are founded in Reason. From hence it follows, that any other Rites would have had the same Perfection, had God ordained them. But then it follows too, that God could not have prohibited moral Virtues and enjoined the contrary, because these would have lain cross to all our original Notices of Good and Evil. For this very Reason, says the *Jew*, are such moral Duties of less Value, because we pay God a greater Deference, when we follow his Commands implicitly, than when we make Reason the Measure of our Obedience.

True, when our Reason presumes to dictate one Thing, and the Law of God directs another. But this is not the present Case ; the moral Duties are not less God’s Law, than the Ceremonial ; only the one is notified to us by natural Reason, the other by positive Institution.

The Doubt then is not, whether God shall be obey’d, but whether in such a Way as I have his Command back’d with my own Reason ; or whether by Ordinances purely arbitrary.

In short, the whole Design of Religion is to plant in our Minds such Dispositions, as render us like God ; and a Man must argue strangely, who maintains, that these Dispositions are not better exerted in Acts essentially good, than in Sacrifices,

or Feasts, or the like, which are not pretended to be so. I own, we ought to rest satisfied, that God had wise Reasons for appointing these; but it is very improperly urged as an Argument of their Excellence, by Adversaries, who sink the Value of our Obedience, in Proportion as our Knowledge for the Reasonableness of our Duty arises. For upon these Terms, if we could imagine God had no End at all, the Ordinances would be still more arbitrary, and by the same Rule our Deference still more respectful.

2. As far from Truth are they, who argue, that the ritual includes the spiritual Worship, and is therefore preferable to it. For this is contrary to Experience, and to the Complaints and Reproofs of all the *Prophets*.

'Tis said indeed, that the most exalted Instances of moral Virtue may be done without those Dispositions, which render them truly virtuous, as well as the ritual Services of the *Jewish* Law. Agreed; provided we observe this Difference, that those Actions are ordinarily the Effects of good Dispositions; and where they are otherwise, it is owing purely to the Corruption of the Person concerned. But between the *Jews* ceremonial and moral Services there is no such natural Connexion. They tend not to purify the Mind, as moral Actions do; and therefore God who rejects them, notwithstanding their solemn Feasts and Obligations, calls upon them to seek Judgment, &c. and then he says, though *your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow*.

These Actions are declared to procure their Sacrifices a favourable Acceptance; because generally speaking, they are Signs of a Mind rightly disposed; but Sacrifices, when destitute of such Actions, cannot recommend themselves. They are indeed Modes of expressing Mens Reverence and Love of God, but this may full as well be expressed without them.

They

They bound that People on whom they were imposed; but could not others therefore, on whom they are not imposed, please God without them?

Or may not that People be accepted, when ceasing to observe them, supposing it to be (as I have shewn it is) the Will of God that they should cease to be observed? This is the Case of ritual Services, but of moral there is but one Way of performing these.

Further, moral Acts do naturally improve the Mind, but the ceremonial are so far from doing this, that they frequently obstruct substantial Holiness, by drawing off Mens Minds from inward Piety, and puffing them up with Hypocrisy and spiritual Pride. See *Matt.* xxiii. 23. xv. 4. *Luke* xx. 47. xviii. 9. 14.

In the mean while, though God prescribed both a moral and ritual Service, yet he always preferred the moral, when they came in Competition. See *Psal.* li. 16, 17. *Hos.* vi. 6. 1 *Sam.* xv. 21.

Nor need it give us any Scruple in this Matter, that God required such an external Worship ever since the Beginning of the World. For since Men cannot signify the inward Dispositions of their Minds, otherwise than by outward and visible Acts, the very Condition of human Nature rendered such Testimonies of Obedience unavoidably necessary. But 'tis one Thing to assert the Necessity of outward Worship in general, and another to infer the Necessity and Merit of that ceremonial one enjoined by the *Levitical* Dispensation in particular.

As little will the Severity of those Punishments, which we read to have been inflicted for the Breach of ritual Laws among the *Jews*, oblige us to conclude the subject Matter of those Laws to be of greater Perfection than the moral.

For the Legislator might appoint his Penalties at Pleasure; and the less there was to enforce Mens Obedience

Obedience from the Reason of the Thing, the more needful was a rigorous Punishment to secure it. But especially, those Ordinances being Signs of a special Covenant between God and that People, every Violation of them was a more direct Affront and Rebellion against his Authority, than the Transgression of any other Laws, which were given to that Nation, in common with the rest of Mankind.

And this leads us to the Meaning of *Israel's* being so often said to be *sanctified* by such Observances. The true Purport whereof is, not that they conveyed to them any real Holiness, but that these were Marks by which God's People were known to be his. The setting any thing apart to his Service and holy Uses is frequently stiled a *sanctifying*, even of Things that are not capable of Holiness, strictly so called. And how we are to interpret it concerning that People under the Law, is to be learnt from *Levit. xx. 24, 25, 26. xi. 44, &c. xix. 2.*

Once more ; the high Opinion Christians entertain of their two Sacraments, does not at all contribute to support the *Jewish* Notion of a *ritual* Worship being more acceptable than an *inward*. In these we do not only commemorate our Redemption, but are taught to believe an inward Grace accompanying the outward Signs. But all this, not in Virtue of the Acts themselves, but of his Promise, who instituted these, as Means of conveying to us the Merits and Benefits of his Death, of which the assisting Graces of God's Spirit are a very valuable Part. Which Effects we likewise confine to the worthy Partakers of these Ordinances, and hold that Men may defeat the Intent of these Ordinances, as to their own particular.

In the mean while, our Honour for these Sacraments is very great, because they tend to excite in Men good Dispositions, by the lively Representation
of

of G
by th
into
by th
cause
insure
stituti
a Ref
but th
had n
there
Graco
Christ
And
ed be
Sacrif
tion of
Th
Case
deny
of Sac
rials a
it, an
Oblig
Ha
and sp
which
come
III.
tended
cal of
was o
ners.
I.
peculia
the Ch
Law.
self,
Vo

of God's Hatred to Sin, and Love to Mankind, by the Sufferings of his Son ; because they put Men into a fit Condition for receiving the divine Grace, by the Preparations previous to them : And because when Men are in this Condition, they do insure to themselves such Benefits as the *Mosaic* Institution could not confer. For the Grace of God is a Restorative to human Nature corrupted by Sin ; but this could be only obtained by his Merits who had no Sin, and suffered to repair that Lapse. If therefore the legal Performances entitled Men to Grace, it was so far forth as they had Respect to Christ, whose Sufferings merit it for fallen Men. And thus the Grace whereby good Men were assisted before and under the Law, was in Vertue of the Sacrifice of the *Lamb of God*, slain from the Foundation of the World.

This then must make a Difference between the Case of them who observe *Jewish* Rites, while they deny any such Redeemer, and theirs who partake of Sacraments with no other View, but as Memorials and Pledges of his Death, and the Benefits of it, and Instances of Dependance upon him, and Obligations to love and serve him.

Having shewed the Excellence of our inward and spiritual, above that outward and ritual Service, which the *Jews* do still so vehemently contend for ; I come now to shew,

III. That the ceremonial Part of the Law was intended to be a peculiar Distinction of that People, typical of the *Messiah* and the Gospel State ; and that it was of itself insufficient for the Justification of Sinners.

1. Their Circumcision was a Note of Distinction peculiar to that People, whereby they were rendered the Children of Promise, and Debtors to do the whole Law. For though Circumcision, considered in itself, was common to them, with other Nations,

yet, as such a federal Rite, it was peculiar to *Israel* alone. Now this on God's Part was a Pledge of signal Benefits, and of that *Seed* in particular, in *whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*.

A further Evidence of this being intended for a distinguishing Character is the Time and Occasion of its Institution.

When the World was given up to Idolatry, God called *Abram* and his Family from among them, and set this indelible Mark upon his own, to secure them from any Confusion that might arise from a promiscuous Intercourse with other Nations. Hence it was observed from *Abram* to the End of their Sojourning in *Egypt*: Hence, after an Intermission of forty Years in the Wilderness where there was no Danger of intermixing with other Nations, it was revived by *Joshua* on the Borders of the promised Land.

In short the same is to be said of the *Jewish* Festivals, and Sacrifices, Passover, their Sabbaths, their Distinction of Meats, their Fringes, and Phylacteries, and many other Usages, enjoined not only in sacred, but civil and domestic Affairs; all which were given for *Signs* of a separate Covenant, and particular Relation between God and them, and Remembrances of Duties, to which upon that Consideration they stood obliged. See *Numb.* xv. 2. xxxv. 34. *Deut.* iv. 14. xi. 8, 9. *Exod.* xiii. 9, &c. See *More Nevoch*, P. 3. Ch. 26. ad 49.

2dly. That these Ceremonies were typical of the *Messiah*, and the Gospel State. To prove which I will shew, that the ritual Parts of the Old Testament did not only casually, but intentionally, and by their very Institution prefigure the New; and also that whatever Excellencies and Effects might recommend the former, the same are compleat and more conspicuous in the latter: So as this is in Substance and Power what the other was in present

Use and feeble Representation only. But as I must be beholden to the New Testament for a sufficient Explanation of the Old; and as the *Jews* will not submit to that, I will prepare the Way by offering some Considerations, why such a Proof ought to be received as authentic and sufficient. And

1. I need not here repeat what hath been formerly proved, that whatever Evidence Men can have of the divine Authority of the Law of *Moses*, there is the same or greater for those Expositions of the Law, which are left us by the Apostles. And if the Precepts in the *Old Testament* are divine, the Interpretations of them in the *New* are so too.

2. The Apostles, particularly St. *Paul*, had a most profound Veneration of the Law of *Moses*, and the Tradition of the Fathers.

The Adversaries they had to deal with, were learned, and prepossessed against the *Christians*; and upon no Account more, than for the Exemption they asserted from the Rites of *Moses's* Law; yet were these Prejudices both of the Hearers and Preachers beaten down by Degrees.

To overcome these, there was no possible Way, but by shewing a good Correspondence between the Law and the Gospel.

That Correspondence, as to the ceremonial Law, was no otherwise established, than by representing the Scheme of the *Mosaic*, as figurative of the Christian Dispensation.

By this very Argument many thousands were won over; particularly where People were most diligent to search the Scriptures daily whether these Things were so.

And if this Method of interpreting the old Law had been as much exploded by the Ancients, as by the modern *Jews*, the Apostles must have drawn upon themselves universal Scorn. So that if it be allowed that the Apostles were Men of any ordinary

ry Reason and Prudence, and their Converts not destitute of both, we need ask no more to justify this Presumption, that the Explications of the ritual Law in the *New Testament*, were by no means contradictory to the stated Maxims, whereby those of that Age judged of the true Importance and Design of the *Old*. I add,

3. Tho' no Text in the Old Testament does directly say, that the legal Institutions were typical, I answer, that it was not at all necessary, because this typical Law was then the Measure of the *Jews* Obedience, till the Anti-type should come to be established in its Place. Nay the Types being not only of a figurative, but in some Sort of a prophetic Importance; as Men were left to find out the Accomplishment of Prophecies, by comparing the Circumstances of Predictions, and their respective Events; why might it not be as reasonable to be left to collect the typical Nature and Design of certain Institutions; by comparing these with the Things typified by them? And why was it not in the one Case as well as the other, time enough to do this, when the Things themselves thus signified, should in their proper Season be brought to Light?

4. Tho' no such clear and direct Passages are to be met with in the *Jewish* Scriptures, yet there are many Intimations in them, which shew, that those Ordinances were not what God ultimately aimed at, nor what good Men did, or any ought wholly to rest upon.

When the *Jews* are commanded to *circumcise their Hearts*; when we read of *uncircumcised Ears*; would not this bear out the Apostle, in saying, that *Circumcision availeth not any Thing, but a new Creature*? And is there not Reason to think, that this was not only an Emblem of the casting away all Impurity, but also a Figure of that *Circumcision made without Hands*, (Col. ii. 11.) when Christians in
their

their Manner put off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh, by the Circumcision of Christ, and being buried with him in Baptism? But,

5. Why do the *Jews* so rigorously demand an express Text out of their Law for this purpose? Why should not such a one content them, as if impartially attended to, ministers ground sufficient for this Inference? Now of that Kind St. Paul hath furnished them with a very remarkable one long ago; no less than that which contains God's own Direction to *Moses*, when he first appointed those ritual Services. (*Exod. xxv. 40.*) The Use he makes of it, is to prove, that the *Priests*, who offered Gifts according to the Law, served to the Example and Shadow of heavenly Things. And this Conclusion he builds upon that Admonition to *Moses*, when he was about to make the Tabernacle, see that thou make all Things according to the Pattern shewed to thee upon the Mount. For truly understanding this Argument, two Things seem to be here implied; one is, that however the Methods for effecting this might vary, yet the general Design was only to put them in a Way of attaining the utmost Perfection of their Nature and Happiness with himself. The second, That the principal Part of the Levitical Institution consisting in the Rites of divine Worship, whatever the Condition of that Institution can be proved to have been, with Regard to this most excellent Branch of it, the same we have Reason to conclude it to have been with Regard to all the rest. Here then we may observe a threefold Gradation; the Things themselves, the Pattern of those Things, and the Things made after that Pattern. Agreeable whereto is that other Distinction of the same Author elsewhere, between the good Things (*Heb. x. 1.*) to come, the very Image of the Things, and the Shadow of them only.

The Prototype is the Bliss and Perfection in a future

ture State. This was the last View, but the Administrations which led Men toward it differed at different Times. Under the *Law*, the Representations of it were distant and confused; and therefore this is called the *Copy* of a *Pattern*, the *Shadow* of an *Image*, dark and indistinct. Under the *Gospel*, the Grace of God is more clearly manifested; and therefore this is called the *Pattern*, the closest Approach to that which is reserved for us in the next Life. As therefore this *Pattern* or *Image* is the immediate Figure of the Prototype, so is that *Shadow* made after the *Pattern* the immediate Figure of the *Pattern*. So that the legal Ordinances were indeed a remote Similitude of celestial Happiness; but a nearer Representation of the Gospel, is that, than which, we cannot have any thing more compleat, except the Thing itself thus represented.

This I take to be the Import of the Apostle's Reasoning; which would have been very ridiculous, had not the *Jews*, with whom he disputed, had some acknowledged Principles for interpreting their ancient Scriptures, with which he was sensible this Construction would agree. I only add in the

6. Last Place, That by affirming the *Law* to have been a Type of the *Gospel*, my Meaning is not that this can be made good of every particular Branch, but that there is such a Correspondence in the general Design of it. From hence it comes to pass, that sometimes one and the same Ordinance prefigures Christ and his Dispensation in several Respects. Sometimes again several Ordinances are a Figure of one and the same Antitype: And all this so, that the Resemblance is not equally proportioned in each of these; but in some more, in others less exact. Thus the *Paschal* Lamb as eaten by the *Israelites* shadowed out the Deliverance of Souls from the Bondage of Sin, the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the Christian Passover of the Lord's Supper, and

and that putting away the *Leaven of Malice and Wickedness*, which is a necessary Preparation of that holy Feast. Sometimes again several Ordinances are a Figure of one and the same Antitype. Thus all the bloody Sacrifices represented the Offering of the Body of Christ, though not all equally. For this was done most significantly by those most solemn Expiations, *whose Blood was brought into the Sanctuary by the High-Priest, and their Bodies burnt without the Camp.*

And thus having prepared my Way, by justifying and explaining the Manner of the Apostles arguing from this Topic in the New Testament, I shall now shew the Use they make of it.

They tell us (*Heb. i. 1.*) that the Manner and Measures of revealing the divine Will to Mankind has differed very much, according to the different Ages of the World, and particularly with Regard to the *Messiah*. But these Discoveries are now clear, which, under the *Levitical* Dispensation, were confused. Hence is this stiled the *Shadow*, *Heb. x. 1.* the Gospel, the *Image*. In short, the whole Epistle to the *Hebrews* proceeds to state the mutual Correspondence between the two Testaments, in the most material Parts of each. Which shews what Stress was due to it, when Men skilled in the Law were the Persons addressed to; and that the better they were versed in the *Jewish* Constitution, the more this would dispose them to receive and be brought over by that double Meaning and Design, which that Author all along attributes to the ceremonial Ordinances. One present and discernible by the Senses, another spiritual and remote, and such as was the Object of their Faith and Understanding only.

I think it necessary to add upon this Occasion, that such Resemblances were not confined to the Circumstances of divine Worship only; but extended

tended to Persons, and Actions, and Events both personal and public. Thus *Adam* is in several Respects represented as a Figure of our blessed Saviour; but with this Difference, that *the first Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit*. See also 1st Pet. iii. 20, 21. Rom. iv. 11. Gal. iv. 22, &c. Rom. ix. xi. But those Similitudes keep Proportion best, where Christ is prefigured in his Offices: By *Moses* as a Prophet; by *David* as a King; by *Aaron* as a Priest. Pass now on from Persons to publick Affairs and Events, and who may not discern a Model of the Christian Church in the Polity of the *Jews*? And for Things purely civil, their Successes and Calamities were never intended to terminate in the Persons to whom they happened.

The Deliverance out of *Egypt* was thought a sufficient Ground to denominate Christ our *Passover*.

The Possession of *Canaan*, where *Joshua* made *Israel* to rest, is mentioned (*Heb. iii. iv.*) as a Shadow of that Rest which shall one Day be by another *Jesus* given to the People of God. I come now,

3. To shew the Insufficiency of the *Mosaic Institution* for the Justification of Sinners.

Those who affirm the Sufficiency of the Law for this Purpose must say one of these two Things. either that it enabled Men to live free from Guilt, or else that after Guilt, it provided them with such Expiations, as fully satisfied for their Offences. But that it did not enable Men to live free from Guilt, appears from the Confessions of the most holy Men in Scripture, *that there is none that doth good, no not one*. See *Psal. cxliiii. 2. 1 Kings viii. 46. Eccles. vii. 20. Job ix. 3. 20. xxv. 5, 6. Ps. cxliiii. 2. cxxx. 3, 4.*

And that it could not take away Sin by Sacrifices and Purifications, appears from the Nature of the Things

Things themselves, which could sanctify no farther than *to the purifying of the Flesh*; but *to purge the Conscience from dead Works to serve the living God*, some more powerful Cleansing was necessary. And for the Sacrifices, that *it is not possible the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin*.

It appears also from the very Institution itself, which commanded those Things to be constantly repeated, thereby plainly insinuating their Imperfection. *Heb. x. 18.* Nor is this Argument invalidated by saying, that the frequent Repetition of Sins renders the frequent Repetition of Sacrifices necessary.

For do not Christians too relapse into Sin daily? Yet is *ours a Sacrifice offered once for all*, by which *one Offering our High Priest hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*: So that this Blood needs not to be shed again, but only commemorated and applied a-new by Sacraments, and other proper Acts of Faith and Contrition. This then is the certain Character of a perfect Sacrifice that its Efficacy is eternal; and consequently the Apostle's Reasoning is just, that *the Law can never with those Sacrifices, make the Comers thereunto perfect*.

He proves the Imperfection of the *Levitical Law*, (see *Heb. vii. 11.*) by the Messiah being promised in the quality of a Priest.

Lastly, the whole Strain of the prophetic Scriptures foretel another Sort of Propitiation, to be made by an innocent and holy Person, and particularly dear to God, (see *Isa. liii. 5. Dan. ix. 24. Gal. ii. 21. Rom. viii. 3, 4. Rom. x. 4.*) Now supposing the former Sacrifices in no Degree defective, could there have been any Room for a new and different one?

These are Considerations of so great Force, that there are but two Ways of evading them: The first is by denying that those Prophecies relate to the
Messiah,

Messiah, which the ancient *Jews* interpreted as belonging to him ; the other, by exposing this Doctrine as contradicting all those Passages, which attribute to such ritual Services the Effects of *cleansing*, and *sanctifying*, and *delivering* from Death ; which must of Necessity, say they, be understood of Death spiritual and eternal, for otherwise neither is the Sacrifice of Christ an effectual Ransom, for even this redeems not from temporal Death.

To this I shall answer by and by ; in the mean Time I proceed to shew,

4. That the ceremonial Law was all along designed to cease ; and that God had given the *Jews* sufficient Intimations of his Pleasure in this Matter.

And if it hath been proved, that the *ceremonial Law* was an *occasional Institution* only, the Consequence is unavoidable, that the Institution must fall, when the Occasion that required it ceases. If *typical*, it must give Way to its Anti-type : If imperfect, what can be more agreeable to Reason, than for *that which is in Part to be done away, when that which is perfect is come* ?

I might drive this Argument yet farther, by shewing that the Obligation of these Laws was not so sacred, as not to be dispensed with upon extraordinary Emergencies, from the Example of *Elijah* offering Sacrifice upon Mount *Carmel*, contrary to the Letter of the Law. But since they say that God never forewarned them of such a Change, I shall content myself with proving the other Branch of my Assertion, and shew that God had sufficiently intimated his Pleasure, that this Dispensation should cease.

I. This was intimated to them at its very first Institution, by the Pattern of the Tabernacle itself, and the Ministry ordained for it. The Tabernacle consisted of three Partitions, each in Holiness excelling that without it. In the *first*, was performed the daily

daily Service; into the *second* went none but the High Priest, and that but once a Year; and then too, not without Blood. But *the Way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest*, says St. Paul. But now we have Boldness to enter into the holiest by the Blood of Jesus. The Consequence whereof is, that if free Access into the Place of God's immediate Presence were altogether forbidden under the *Levitical Law*, the opening of it by the Blood of Christ must have put an End to it.

2. A second Intimation was the Promise of a *Messiah* as a Priest, after the Order of *Melchisedeck*, and not after the Order of *Aaron*. And hence the Apostle had Reason to infer, that the *Priesthood being changed, there is made of Necessity a Change also of the Law*.

3. The same was signify'd in all those Texts, that speak of the Inefficacy of the legal Sacrifices. (See *Heb. x. 8, 9.*)

4. This is yet more plainly foretold by *Jeremiah xxxi. 31, &c.* From whence St. Paul infers, *Heb. viii. 8. 13.* that the mention of a *new Covenant* implies the first to be old. See *Hag. ii. 6. Heb. xii. 26, 27.*

5. Of the like Importance are all the Predictions which mention the Calling of the *Gentiles*. See *Isa. xi. 10. xlix. lx. xix. 19. 24. ii. 2. Mic. iv. Mal. i. 11.* All which are punctually fulfilled in the preaching of the Gospel, but not so much as possible, supposing the Law still in Force, which confined all solemn Worship and Sacrifices to the Temple of *Jerusalem*. Nay not only so, but this Enlargement of the Church plainly supersedes those other Ceremonies whose Use was to distinguish *Israel* as God's peculiar. For the *Partition Wall must needs be broken down, and Jew and Gentile both made one*, whenever those Prophecies should be accomplished. *Gal. iii. 7, 8.*

6. The

6. The Expiration of the Law is abundantly notified to the *Jews* by the Destruction of their City and Temple, and the miserable Dispersion of that People, after the Promulgation of that new Law and Covenant by *Jesus* and his Apostles. *Dan. ix. 24.* After so full a Proof that God did not change this Institution without abundant Warnings,

I shall only add, that the Texts and Phrases alledged for the Perpetuity of the Law of *Moses* do not only admit, but even require a Sense different from what the *Jews* put on them. I come now,

V. To shew that the Examples of *Jesus* and his Apostles, who observed the Law of *Moses*, are not inconsistent with the Christian Doctrine concerning the Expiration of the *Levitical Law*.

For before the Death of Christ the ritual Law was in full Force.

From thence, to the Destruction of the *Jewish* Polity and the Temple, and the sufficient Publication of the Gospel, it was wasting. At which Time it was indifferent, but not unlawful. Now this is the very Juncture to which the Objections taken from the Apostles Behaviour and Writings do properly refer; and consequently the Objections are of no Strength at all.

VI. Whereas it hath been objected, that *Moses* and some other Prophets have foretold the Return of the *Jews*, and that they should keep the Law in their own Land, I will shew that these Predictions, even when interpreted of their Restoration from their present Dispersion, do not render the Christian Doctrine inconsistent with the Law. For,

1. Their expected Return must be under the Conduct of the *Messiah*, whom I have proved to have been *Jesus* of *Nazareth*.

2. They expressly say, that in the Days of the *Messiah* all Sacrifice shall cease, except that of Praise and Thanksgiving. And what is this in Effect but

to acknowledge the same Alteration in their Law, when Christ shall come, which we contend hath already obtained over it, who believe him already come?

Urging, Page 458, the Insufficiency of their legal Sacrifices, I mentioned an Objection countenanced by those Passages of Scripture, which attribute to these the Effects of *cleansing, making Atonement, and saving Souls from Death.*

Now this, say they, must mean Death *spiritual* and *eternal*, and that sets the Law upon an equal Foot with the Gospel.

For even the Christian Sacrifice redeems not from Death temporal; and therefore it is but a vain Boast of the Apostle to say, that *Jesus hath abolished Death.*

The *Jewish* Arguments to this Purpose may be reduced to these two:

1. Every Remedy must be proportion'd to the Disease, and therefore the Sufferings due for Sin can be released only by Sufferings of the same Kind. The Sufferings therefore of *Jesus* upon the Cross being temporal and bodily only, could not take away Death spiritual and eternal.

2. It is evident, that full Satisfaction hath not been made, where any Part of the Punishment remains. But the Afflictions of Life, and the Death of the Body remain, therefore Christ *hath not abolished Death.*

In answer to this Reasoning, I will shew,

1. That the Grounds of this Objection are, what the *Jew* cannot stand by, but all the absurd Opinions charged upon the Christian Religion, in this Matter, are equally acknowledged in his own; and then,

2. That the Continuance of Labour and Afflictions, and bodily Death, notwithstanding, the Assertion, that *Jesus Christ hath abolished Death* is rational and true.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis plain that the Grounds of this Objection are what the *Jew* cannot abide by. *That* there is born with every Man an evil Principle, which is the Cause of all our Afflictions and Mortality here, and the Miseries of another World, and that Death should be destroy'd, and Man restored to Happiness by the Messiah, is confessed by eminent Writers of their own; who apply to him in the most rigorous Sense those Words of *Isaiab* (xxv. 8.) *He shall swallow up Death in Victory.* Where then is the Absurdity we are insulted with? Is it that we believe a spiritual Death removed by Vertue of a bodily The *Jews* believe it; they impute the Expiation of Sin to that vicarious Death of the Sacrifice offered for the Sinner. But are the Sufferings of the Beast slain in his Behalf other than bodily and temporal? And ought we to be treated with Scorn for ascribing a mighty Effect to the Death of the Son of God by them, who ascribe the same Effect to the Blood of Beasts? Or is it ridiculous, that a Satisfaction for Sin should be pretended, where temporal Death, a Part of the Punishment for Sin, continues to be executed?

But this is exactly their own Case again. Whatever propitiatory Virtue belongs of Right to the Christian Sacrifice, all that the *Jews* erroneously claim for the legal Expiations. If therefore after such Expiations made, they are not exempted from the Toils and Troubles of Life, and die like common Men, it equally concerns them to take off the pretended Inconsistencies which they charge us with.

2. That the Continuance of Labour, and Sorrow, and bodily Death, notwithstanding the Assertion, that *Jesus Christ hath abolished Death* is rational and true. The Word rendered by us *abolished* is very familiar with St. *Paul*, and implies the taking away, not always of the Thing itself then spoken of, but of

of the Use and Power of the Thing, and so making it in Effect as though it were not at all. See 1 Cor. ii. 6. Rom. iv. 14. vii. 2. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 7. 11. 13. 14. Galat. v. 4. 1 Cor. xiii. 8. So that when applied (1 Cor. xv. 26. 2 Tim. i. 10) to Death, it does not necessarily import, that Men should never die at all, by Vertue of *Christ's* dying for them; but only, that Death hath no longer the same Dominion and Effects upon Mankind, which once it had; and that their Condition in this Respect is full as good as if they were not to die at all.

In order to apprehend rightly this Matter, let us take a View of Mankind,

1. In their primitive Innocency.

2. Under their Guilt and Punishment as yet unremoved. And

3. As redeemed and reconciled to God by *Christ*.

1. Man in his primitive Innocence appears to have been in full Possession of a blissful Immortality. But,

2. In the next View, we behold him stripp'd of his Comforts and most noble Privileges, because spoiled of his Innocence, their only Foundation and Security. Afflictions succeeding to Happiness, and Death at last extinguishing the wretched Remains of a guilty Life. But how extinguishing? Not by an utter Annihilation, but which is infinitely worse, reducing his Body to Dust, without any hope of a future Restitution; and abandoning his Soul to endless Remorse, and to such other Torments as God had condemned it to.

3. But the third View presents us reconciled to God by the Death of his Son; our Souls redeemed from everlasting Punishments by his temporal Pains, and our Bodies restored to a better Life by his Resurrection from the Dead. The Troubles of this World, and the Dissolution of this Body, do still

still warn us and chastise us as Sinners ; but neither are those Sorrows comfortless, nor that Dissolution final. And this State is more for our Advantage, than if we had remained in the same Immortality *Adam* first had. For how would God have disposed of him, had he never sinned, we know not ; but if we will reason from what we do know, the Case stands thus : His was a State, in which it was possible for him not to die, but possible to die too, because possible for him to sin. We after a bodily Death are removed into a State, in which it shall be impossible for us to sin, or to die ; and that too, notwithstanding any Power which the former, but forgiven Sins of them, who die in *Jesus*, might be supposed to give Death over them, by the Terms of the first Covenant made with *Adam*, and all his Posterity in him.

Herein then properly consisted the Dominion of Death, that it did not only dissolve, but quite destroy the Bodies of Sinners. Consequently herein consists the *abolishing of Death*, that Mens Bodies are so united to their Souls as to suffer no future Separation ; and this implies their Souls to be liable to no future Sin. But as the present World admits of no such State, it follows that this is a Blessing reserved for another World, not only unattainable by Man, if permitted to abide what he originally was, but infinitely more desirable, than any Thing he could have attained to.

Hence again the Abolition of Death is properly ascribed to *Jesus Christ* : For as Death is introduced as a Penalty for Offences, and subsists in Sin, so consequently, the Resurrection of Christ, which gave Assurance of Sin being taken away, is both an Instance and Pledge of our future Resurrection. Thus, as by *Man came Death*, by *Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead*.

Hence, once more, it is evident, that it is false

to affirm, that the Condition of Mankind is worse, with Regard to Afflictions and bodily Death, than before this pretended Satisfaction was made; there being this advantageous Difference, that we are assured of these Things shortly ceasing; and that the Bodies and Souls of good Men shall be eternally happy hereafter. And who would not contentedly suffer a Moment's Pain for a blessed Eternity? Or be afraid of Death, that has not only no Influence upon the Soul, but even qualifies the Body for a better State? And which, as it includes our bodily Sufferings and Dissolution, is not only preliminary to, but an Instrument and Occasion of our greater future Happiness. For could we not have died in Defence of it, Religion would not have received a Testimony so much to its Honour, nor Mankind so great a Bliss. But

II. Jesus did not only *abolish* Death, but brought *Life and Immortality to Light*.

I observed before, that the *Jew* alledges the constant Expectation of a future State in holy Men under the *Jewish* Dispensation.

I will now shew, that this Principle was not owing to the Law of *Moses*; and that the bringing of *Life and Immortality to Life* is truly attributed here to *Jesus* and his Gospel. But in order to do this Argument Right, I will,

1. Shew that there were many plain Intimations of another Life given both before and under the Law.

2. Account for temporal Promises being made the express Encouragements of Obedience to the Law of *Moses*.

3. Explain the Pre-eminence of the Gospel with Regard to the Matter under Consideration.

1. Of those Intimations of a future happy State, which were before, and under the Law. Some

may be reckoned common to Mankind ; others peculiar to such as enjoyed a divine Revelation.

Under the former Sort, I comprehend the powerful Convictions we derive from Reason of a principle within us superiour to our Bodies, and not liable to the same Decay with them : The innate Presages, and Desires of future Things, which would not have been implanted, had there been no Provision made for them : The Tradition of all Ages and Countries : The Connection of a Belief of a future State with all our Ideas of God, which are not to be reconciled with the unequal Distributions of Things in this World, supposing no future State to set Things to rights. These are such Topics as the wise Men of all Nations have used to argue from.

I come now to shew some of the many Testimonies which the *Jews* had of a future State, by Revelation.

The Argument from Providence particularly must needs be very strong with them, because the History of no Nation furnishes so many Examples of Piety and Affliction, *viz. Abel, Noah, Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David*, and many others, who are so many Instances of suffering Virtue, and so many Proofs of a Recompence hereafter. Notwithstanding all their Difficulties, these good Men retained their Integrity. And upon what Principle they did so, *St. Paul* informs us, *Heb. xi. 13, 14, 15, 16.* See also *Gen. xlix. 18. Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. Job xiii. 15. Psal. xcvi. 10.*

Now how these Persons should come to express such lively Hope of future Blessedness, had Promises of temporal Blessings only been afforded to the Ages wherein they lived, I cannot understand. Let us then see what Foundation for such Confidence seems to be laid in the Writings of the Old Testament. And,

1. Having proved Sin to be the Cause of Death,
I infer,

I infer, that wheresoever we find God promising Pardon, there is involved a virtual Promise of a happy Immortality: Consequently every Prediction of a Redeemer; every Sacrifice offered from the Beginning of the World, was a Shadow and Pledge of a future Happiness, and in this Respect, the Assurances of Life and Immortality are of a Date with our first Parents Fall.

2. The Promise to be *Abram's exceeding great Reward*, and the God of him and his Posterity, is an Expression so comprehensive, as to imply all the Benefits that those Persons were in any Capacity to reap from God, both in this and the next World. See *Heb. xi. 16.* And our Saviour uses that Passage out of the Bush, to convince the *Sadducees*, that the Resurrection of the Dead was a Doctrine delivered by *Moses*, *Luke xx. 37, 38.* See also *Luke xvi. 22, 23. Mat. viii. 11. John v. 39.*

3. As to the Posterity of these Patriarchs, they succeeded into the Rights of their Ancestors; and having the same Assurances repeated in the Body of their Law, that God *would dwell among them, and be with them, be their God, and they his People.* The same Expressions were no doubt intended to carry the same extensive and beneficial Sense under the Law, which they bore at their first uttering. But this is not all: For,

4. The *Mosaical* Œconomy was typical. Its Sacrifices of Propitiation represented the Death of Christ, and as such only, made Atonement. Its Rites of Purity, the sanctifying Graces of the Holy Ghost. Its temporal Promises convey'd a Right to the heavenly *Canaan.* The Services that kept Men in Communion with God's People, then on Earth, made them mystical Members of Christ's Body. Thus was Christ not only the ultimate End, but the very Life and Substance of the Law.

Thus I have shewn, that though holy Men here-

tofore acted in the Belief of a future State, yet the Grounds of that Expectation were not owing to the Law of *Moses*.

II. The next Thing I proposed, is to account for the Promises of temporal Blessings being made the express Encouragement for Obedience to that Law.

1. The Scripture tells us, that one great Design of the *Levitical* Œconomy was, to reduce the *Israelites* from that Idolatry, which had infected the World; the fundamental Principles of which was, that Mens Success in their Affairs depended on the Practice of certain Rites in Honour of their false Gods. In order to extirpate this Error, it was necessary to convince the *Israelites*, that these were not the Instruments of Men's Prosperity and Plenty. Hence several of these Usages God prohibited; others with some small Change he appropriated to his own Worship.

But then to engage his People in his Service, he made those Blessings the Reward of their Obedience in the true, which the mistaken Heathen proposed as a Motive of their false Religion, inculcating perpetually, that these Things could come from none but him.

This was the Necessity of temporal Promises and Threatenings to enforce a Law that could never have answered its End without them.

Whereas the Notion of a future State being established and handed down by an uninterrupted Tradition, there was not the same Occasion to be so express in these; but their already received Notions, confirmed by the Renewal and Application of those general Promises which were perfectly understood to imply the Happiness of another World, were sufficient for the Exigencies of that People at that Time.

2. Another Account may be taken from the present

sent Degeneracy of that People, who were tied up to a ritual and laborious Worship to contain them in their Duty, because as yet incapable of the Simplicity of a more spiritual Religion : Therefore they were to be allured by worldly Rewards, because sunk beneath that generous Frame of Spirit, which is requisite to relish the Promises of a future Recompence.

By this Reasoning the Jews say, that we blasphemously vilify both the Institution and the Author, by representing the one as trifling and impertinent ; and the other as weak and fickle. To which I answer, that the Immutability of God does not infer, that every Ordinance of his must be immutable ; because the Measures God proceeds by here are not his own Perfections, but the Infirmities of his Creatures. And the Wisdom of a Lawgiver is in no Instance more conspicuous, than in consulting the present Circumstances of his Subjects. Here then lies the Case ; Faith in Jesus Christ and the Love of God and our Neighbour, ever was, and will be the Sum of all Religion ; but the Manner of expressing this Faith and Love to each may vary, and some Instances of it may be fit at one Time and not at another. To this Purpose, see *Abrabanel apud Hoornbeck contra Judæos lib. vii. cap. i. p. 463.* See *Maimon. more Nevoch. p. 111. cap. xxxii.*

This was the Reason why the Law wanted of the utmost spiritual Perfection. It was a Defect imputable to the Time and the Persons, not to the Author, or Ordinance itself. We own it to have been the very best that Season would bear, and that it includes and implies the precious Promises of a blessed Eternity ; yet still in such a Manner includes them, as to leave this Preeminence due to Jesus Christ, that *he hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel.* Which leads me,

III. To explain wherein this Preeminence does truly consist.

Though Jews and Christians differ in their Notions concerning the Messiah, and his Kingdom, yet both agree, that his coming, and the Establishment of his Kingdom, were the great governing Design of all God's Dispensations, and the main Thing driven at by the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Of this the Apostles constantly speak, as purposed before the World began, and testified by the Law and the Prophets. See *Acts* vii. 36. *1 Cor.* x. *Heb.* xi. 26. *Gal.* iii. 17. *John* viii. 56. *1 Pet.* i. 11. iii. 19, 20. *Heb.* xiii. 8. *Rom.* vii. 14. *Heb.* vii. 16. And as much then as the Substance is preferable to the Shadow, Accomplishment to Promises, and Plainness to ambiguous Expressions, so just, so great a Preeminence is due to the evangelical, above the legal Dispensation. And thus is *Life and Immortality brought to Light by the Gospel.*

It hath been formerly observed, that the Christians are charged by the Jews with misinterpreting and misapplying the Prophecies of the Old Testament, by which they endeavour to prove, that *Jesus of Nazareth* is the very *Messiah* there foretold.

That God designed to send into the World an eminent Deliverer descended from *David* and *Solomon*, is believed by both Jews and Christians. But the Jews will not allow *Jesus of Nazareth* should be esteemed this Person, and that upon the Account of these following Inconsistencies, as they pretend.

1. Because the Prophecies acknowledged on both Sides to point out the *Messiah* could not otherwise answer the End of inspiring them, than by an Accomplishment so plain, as might sufficiently distinguish the Person meant by them to be that Messiah. But no such Accomplishment can be discerned in *Jesus*, and consequently he is not the Person.

2. Because

2. Because several Predictions, which the *Christians* apply to *Jesus* are wrested to a Meaning, which quite destroys the historical Sense of Scripture, and breaks the Connection of the Passages from whence they are taken.

3. Because in their forced Applications of the Prophecies, the *Christians* finding themselves hard pressed by the simple and natural Construction, forsake the literal, and take Shelter in the spiritual and mystical.

4. Because admitting that many Passages of Scripture, and of prophetic Scripture more especially, must be figuratively taken, yet we must put a Difference between a Sense not just as the Words in their first Signification import, and a Sense directly contrary to what they import.

By Way of Answer to these Exceptions, I will offer some general Considerations with regard to the Nature, and Use, and Interpretation of Prophecies, those that concern the Messiah especially.

1. I will assign some Reasons why the Predictions relating to this Matter are so obscure.

2. I will shew that such Obscurity, notwithstanding those Prophecies, were an Instruction sufficient for that Dispensation, and the Purposes God intended them to serve.

3. I will make such Remarks upon the Grounds that support the Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament-Prophecies concerning the Messiah, as shew the Vanity of the *Jews* Objections against the Manner of applying them to *Jesus* in the New Testament.

4. I shall set myself to consider the true Force of Arguments drawn from this Head, and how far the Proof of the Christian Faith does really depend upon them.

1. I am now to assign some Reasons why many of the Prophecies relating to the Messiah, should be so obscure.

This is owing in great Part to the Style and Genius of the prophetical Books, which are full of bold Metaphors, Allegories, and Transitions, so that 'tis not to be wondered at, if Interpreters have fallen into more Variety of Opinions, concerning the Prophecies, than any other Parts of the Scripture.

In some Cases indeed, the Figures are obvious; but in others it may admit of some Dispute, whether the figurative or literal Signification is to be preferred, where both may be reasonable; in some, almost every Circumstance is significant; in others the greater Part serve only for Ornament. Sometimes the Prophet speaks of Events near at hand, then an Impulse of the holy Spirit hurries him away to others more distant. Sometimes the Party spoken of is mentioned under his proper Character, sometimes under the Character of another. And in like wise whole Countries are set to signify not only those Places, but denote others in After-ages, like them in the same Sins. *Isa. xix. 18. 25.* Lastly, the Prophet sometimes speaks in his own Name, sometimes in God's, at others in that of some third Person, or of a Church or People collectively.

To these Observations of Prophecies in general, we may add others that concern those of the *Messiah*, and his Days in particular. As,

1. The Convenience of Parables and Allegories, to convey bold and necessary Truths, where open Reproofs would never gain Admittance.

Had our Saviour in plain Terms told the *Jews* of the Destruction of the City and Temple, and the Calamities of their Nation, which he insinuated by Parables, *Matt. xxi. 33. 41. xxii. 2. 7. Luke xix. 12. 27.* they would have laid hold of him.

Now the Prophets had to deal with the same Dispositions, and had equal Obligations to the same Methods; and they who murdered their Prophets, which denounced a seventy Years Captivity only, would

would have set no Bounds to their Fury, had the Miseries of this long and lasting Dispersion been delivered in as peremptory Terms. The *Romans* too are thought (*Euseb. Dem. Evan. Lib. vii. p. 199. Edit. Step.*) to have been covertly pointed at under the borrowed Names of other Empires, that the Church might meet with better Quarter, when the Oracles of those Scriptures, on which it was built, gave no public Offence to the State. And the Representations of the *Jewish* Obstinacy, and of the *Gentiles* Happiness, have been likewise believed industriously dark, that plainer Dealing should not provoke those Men to destroy the Scriptures themselves, rather than suffer the Monuments of their Shame to upbraid them in future Ages. So that if this Reason be of any Weight, the Obscurity of the Prophecies is so far from a Prejudice to Christianity, that this very Thing has preserved the great Evidences of it.

2. The very Nature of the Events foretold would bring the Predictions concerning the Messiah under a Necessity of being involved in great Variety of Figures, rather than any other Predictions.

He is represented as a *Prophet* excelling all others. *Deut. xviii. 15, &c.*

As a Priest possessed of an everlasting Priesthood, and offering himself for the Sins of the People. See *Psal. cx. 4. Heb. v. vi. vii.*

As a King, vested in a Kingdom different from all others, in that it is spiritual and eternal, a Dominion over the Souls and Bodies of his Subjects.

So that in each of these Capacities every Thing was extraordinary; all so noble as to call for the most towering Flights to describe, and some so remote from Sense and common Appearances, that there was a Necessity of borrowed Resemblances to give us any Idea of them at all.

3. Another Cause of the Obscurity of those Prophecies

phesies relating to the *Messiah*, may be ascribed to his different Offices, and to the promiscuous Mention of his first and second Coming.

The *Messiah* is foretold in the Quality of a Prophet, Priest, and King. 'Tis true, the Predictions relating to his kingly Office, are more in Number, than either of the other, because this was the noblest Part of his Character, but yet the prophetic and priestly are as essential to him, and equally deserve our Attention. Had any one of these been wanting, the Scheme of Man's Redemption had been broken and imperfect. And each of them required distinct Operations.

The Prophet's Business was to teach his People; and since this great Prophet's Design was to raise Men's Desires by the clearest Revelations of a future Happiness, to support them under Afflictions; to work them up to a Contempt of the World, and justify God in the Sufferings of good Men; it was agreeable to the Method God had taken with the *Jews*; that such a Preacher's Example should bear Testimony to his Doctrine. Now Saint Stephen's Question, *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers persecuted?* was so far from receiving an Answer in the Negative, that Indignities and Barbarity seem to have been not only the Portion of them all, but as it were a Mark of their Mission. Thus the Poverty and Persecutions of *Jesus* were typified in those Preachers. And as the Excellence of his Doctrine was above theirs, so the Enforcement of his Example was superior to theirs also; that *never any Sorrow was like his Sorrow*.

The *Priestly* Office was to make Intercession for the People by the Atonement of Bloody Sacrifices. And therefore he who was ordained to sanctify the People by the Sacrifice of his own Blood, must of Necessity die.

The Administration of his *Kingly* Office was to
succeed

succeed the other two, because that is mentioned as a Reward of his Fidelity and Sufferings. See *Heb.* ii. 10. x. 12. 13. *Phil.* ii. 7. to 11.

This Succession of his Offices the Apostles seem to have been aware of; as we gather not only from the Explication of the Prophecies by Jesus himself. See *Luke* xxiv. 25, 26. 45. 48. but from their Behaviour in those Contentions about Precedence in his Kingdom, which are constantly taken Notice of, as immediately following upon the Intimations they received of the Approach of his Death and Resurrection. See *Matt.* xx. 19, 20, &c. *Mark* ix. 33, &c. *Luke* ix. 46. xxii. 24. Their great Error in this Point, was an Imagination, that his Kingdom should not only commence, but be established in (See *Luke* xxiv. 21. *Acts* i. 6.) full Power, immediately after his rising from the Dead; which is contrary to Scripture.

The Christ performed his *Prophetic* Office by teaching a most perfect Doctrine; his *Priestly* by offering his Blood for the Sins of the World. But his *Kingly* is exerted in Distribution of Justice, and the Judgment both of Quick and Dead. Now is it not obvious, that a Day of Tryal must go before a Day of Recompence? Ought not the Gospel to have a Space of Time to prove its own Truth, and the Predictions of it by its Success? Ought not the Murderers of Christ to convince the World of their Sin by their unparalleled Punishment? And could this Punishment be so exemplary, if long Continuance did not add to the Severity of it? In short, is it not reasonable, that God should proceed gradually, by bringing about Variety of Events to his own Honour, and that of his Saints; by not making Haste in a Matter of the last Importance, but first trying all Methods, till the World is ripe for Judgment. Although therefore Christ be exalted to have *all Power*, yet is not that Power so fully executed

as it shall one Day be. When that Day shall be, is not material to enquire: It may suffice, that it shall not be sudden; as appears from *Deut. xxviii. Dan. ix. Hof. iii. viii. Jer. vi. Ezek. xxii. xxxiii. xxxvi. Luke xix. 12. Matt. xxv. 19.*

In short: The promiscuous Mention of the several Offices of the Messiah, sometimes in the very same Prophecies of the Old Testament, is an Obscurity, which one may think would occasion too great Errors. The first, that the Jews indulging their Hopes of worldly Prosperity, have set their Hearts so much upon the *Messiah's Royal* Character, as almost to overlook the *Priestly* and *Prophetical*. The *other*, not observing duly the Order and Periods of these Characters, they require unseasonable Demonstrations of *Jesus* being the Christ. Had the *former* been well attended to, they would have seen no Cause for the Fable of a two-fold *Messiah*. Had they distinguished justly upon the *latter*, they would have discerned the Fitness of the Apostle's Arguments; who when they make Proof of our Lord's answering the *prophetic* Character in his Teaching, and Miracles, and the *Sacerdotal* in his Death and Intercession, content themselves in the mean while with proving his Entrance into the *regal* by his Resurrection, Ascent into Heaven, and by the Mission of the Holy Ghost, do produce such Evidences, as all who were acquainted with the Prophecies ought to be concluded by. To cavil at the *regal* Office of Christ not being then in as conspicuous a Manner exercised, as were the other two, at his first coming; is to misunderstand the Prophets, and to confound the two Advents. In a Word, upon these Grounds no Meanness of our Lord's Appearance upon Earth continues any Objection, because the full Completion of the Prophecies in what is past, and the Beginning and Progress of his Kingdom, were enough to persuade Men to a Belief of all that was still behind. 4.

4. Another Reason of the Obscurity of these Prophecies, are the very different Figures, in which we find the Messiah drawn upon this Account. For what can be more distant than to be styled, sometimes *without Form or Comeliness*, at other Times, *fairer than the Children of Men*: Sometimes a *Worm*, and no *Man*; at other Times the *God whose Throne is for ever and ever*. *Psal. cx. 1. Matt. xxii. 42. 44. Heb. i. 13. x. 12. 13. Matt. xxi. 16. Heb. ii. 7. Psal. cii. 25. Heb. i. 10. 12.* These almost contradictory Characters of one and the same Person, may well be allowed to create some Confusion in Men, who are not careful to distinguish and compare the Circumstances of the *Messiah*, and the Prophecies foretelling him, justly together. But yet,

II. All these Reasons of Obscurity, notwithstanding the Old Testament Prophecies were a competent Instruction for that Dispensation, and did very well answer the Ends God designed them for.

Now the End of Prophecies was to give Men Notice of some important Events, as yet in the Counsel of God only; and to exercise their Faith with the Expectation of them. But this Use implies two Qualifications in such Notices.

1st. That they be not in every Point clear, for then they would be no longer an Exercise of Faith.

2^{dly}, As Prophecy implies a Degree of Darkness, which may distinguish it from clear Perception, so does it likewise imply so much of Light, as may, upon due Attention guide Men to the Person or Thing prophesied of. And this results from a Congruity between the Prediction and Event. For Events are the proper Explanations of Prophecies; and therefore the Application of no Prediction is of any Force, which cannot be shewed to belong to and be accomplished in the Object we apply it to.

If

If then we would affirm the Prophecies of the *Messiah* to answer the Necessities of the Ages in which they were delivered, we must at the same Time affirm, that they were so contrived as to be sufficient Notes of Distinction to know the *Messiah* by at his coming, and reasonable Grounds of such a Faith, as God required from them, who lived under these Revelations before his coming; which will be proved by these following Considerations.

1. From the Absurdity of the contrary Supposition. Both Christians and Jews own, that the great Design of Prophecy, was to acquaint the World with the *Messiah*, that they might support themselves with the joyful Prospect, and to prepare for his Reception; and what could produce either of these Effects, less than such Marks peculiar to that Object of their Hope and Reverence as might satisfy them, when they were possessed of the Blessing, they were commanded to expect? The only Question is, whether the Apostles applied those Marks to the right Person? The *Jews* say not; but without Ground, as appears,

2. From the Reasons already said, to render the Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* obscure, which are none of them such, as hinder their Effect, by leaving Men at a Loss whom to apply them to.

The Parables could not do it upon many Accounts; because these are Difficulties common in part to other Prophecies, whose Application is not disputed; because the *Jews* were aware of a nobler and mystical Sense couched under them; because the Synagogue hath constantly agreed in the Expectation of a *Messiah*, from certain Passages in Scripture, which have ever been allowed to relate to him; and lastly, because some of the Prophecies, viz. (*Dan. ix.*) expressly say, that the *Messiah* should be cut off. The Time indeed hath bred Disputes, but the Thing itself could not have been more clearly signified,

nified, nor the Ends of his Death more fully explained.

The different Capacities in which he is represented, are an unerring Rule to distinguish him by. 'Tis possible, indeed, in the Consideration of single Prophecies, to find out some other Person or Event, to which each of these might be adapted : But tho' there want not several of these, which, even when taken apart, are true of the *Messiah* only ; yet the right Way of coming to the Knowledge of him, is by a Connection of the whole, the exact Agreement of all the Prophecies together.

3. *This Light of Prophecy, tho' shining in a dark Place*, will yet appear to have been a sufficient Guide to the former Ages of the World, if we reflect upon the Effect it was intended to produce, which was Faith in Christ : But Faith in Christ to come, and that Circumstance of Time, makes a Difference : But 'tis to be observed, that a less Degree of Faith is due to prophecies *before*, than *after* their Accomplishment. *Before*, a more or less explicit Faith, as the Revelation, which is its proper Basis, is more or less explicit. *After*, a full and perfect Acquiescence, because the Will of God so revealed is then performed, and his Truth justified beyond doubt.

God does not allow the same Motives of Faith to all Men, and yet he expects Faith from all ; but not the same Faith. Thus for Instance, the Promise that the *Woman's Seed should break the Serpent's Head*, seems to oblige our first Parents to believe that the Redeemer of Mankind should be born of a Woman ; but they could not be bound to believe that he should be the Son of *Abram*, till God had declared, that *in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*.

This makes it evident, that God opened this mysterious Work of Providence gradually, and conse-

consequently, that there was not one determinate Measure of Faith for all promiscuously, but that the Duty of each Age and Person in this Respect was enlarged, in Proportion to the Revelations, and other Means of Knowledge afforded them.

4. The Sufficiency of the ancient Prophecies for the Use of former Ages, is yet more confirmed by this, that as they were not all given at once, so neither were they, or could they be fulfilled all at once, but every fresh Event added Perspicuity and Strength to those that went before.

All that were done to, or happened to the *Messiah*, from his Birth to his Resurrection, were a Work of some Time; and Men are to examine and compare all of them together, and observe how they made up the complicated Character of the *Messiah*, and answer to the Prophecies.

The more of these Events concurred to bear Testimony to Jesus, the more blameable was the *Jews* Unbelief; and when they all concurred, rendered it inexcusable. For to suppose that these could meet in any but the *Messiah*, had been to defeat all the Notes, he was to be known by.

Hence, no doubt, it was, that our Lord forbade his Transfiguration to be divulged, 'till he should be *risen from the Dead*. Mark ix. 9. Because the *Jews* were not ripe for this Emblem of his future Glory. But that Action demonstrated him to be that Son of God celebrated in the 2d *Psalms*; and consequently after this Account of his Transfiguration might very reasonably be believed, and the Intent of it understood by them. Hence the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas* was by himself reserved for the last to that *adulterous Generation*. Matt. xii. 39, 40.

Hence in the Disputes of the Apostles, they are pressed with this, as an impregnable Defence of the Christian Faith: As an undeniable Testimony

of God's approving the Actions of *Jesus*: As the first Step of his Promotion and Recompence, the Investiture in that Kingdom of which there shall be no End, the certain Pledge of all the happy Effects to follow in the Course of his Administration. *Acts* ii. 32—36. x. 40—42. xvii. 31.

I come now,

III. To make such Remarks upon the Grounds that support the Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament-Prophecies concerning the Messiah, as shew the Vanity of the *Jews* Objections against the Manner of applying them to *Jesus* in the New Testament.

1. That they have gone upon a sure Ground, by urging no Prophecies as concerning the Messiah, which were not really intended of him. The following Reflections convince any one.

1. The Article of the Messiah being of so great Importance, that all the Prophets bore witness to it, we cannot imagine this Testimony defective in not leaving such Marks, as might distinguish the Messiah at his Coming.

2. This Testimony being given at several Distances of Time, by Persons inspired, we cannot doubt, but that the following Prophecies added new Light to those that went before.

3. That these distinguishing Characters of the Messiah must have been signified long before they were applied to *Jesus*.

4. These Prophecies being many of them obscure, as they were interwoven with others relating to Events of different Kinds.

'Tis natural to think that the *Jews* had some fixt Rules to distinguish those concerning the Messiah from the rest; if not, we cannot account for the Application of sundry Prophecies to the Messiah, which both *Jews* and Christians refer to him, without sufficient Evidence of their relating to this Mat-

ter, either from the Words themselves simply considered, or from the Context and Occasion of them.

5. If there was any Time in which the Messiah's Approach was particularly expected, Men's Minds would be turned upon this Subject; and consequently the Belief of that Age must have been less liable to be imposed upon, either with false Marks of the *Messiah*, or by a wrong Application of the true Marks, than any other Age. Now that the Interval between *Herod's* Reign, and the Destruction of *Jerusalem* was such a Period, might easily be proved both from *Jewish* and *Prophane* Writers. But then it is as true, that this was the very Season of our Lord's conversing among the *Jews*; the most improper Juncture that could be taken to bring over that People to the Belief of a *Messiah*, if the Person professing himself so to be, did not punctually answer those Characters, which, according to the received Opinion of that Age, were necessary to frame an Idea of the *Messiah*, conformable to the Prophecies concerning him: Consequently the Success of such a Doctrine, at such a critical Time, is a greater Proof of the Truth of it, than the same Success at any other Time.

From these Premises laid together, I see no Reason to doubt the Judgment of the Synagogue in our Saviour and his Apostles Days: But then it must, I think, seem probable in the highest Degree too, that in all their Conference with the *Jews*, our Lord and his Apostles went thus far in perfect Agreement with the Synagogue, as may be justified from these few Considerations.

1. It is evident, that in all Disputes no Conviction can be wrought, unless the Arguments used for this Purpose set out upon Principles received by both Parties. Now the whole of our Controversy, with Regard to this Matter, turning entirely upon these two Questions, *Whether the Predictions alledged from*
the

the Old Testament do truly belong to the *Messiah*; and then, *Whether these be so fulfilled in Jesus; as to prove him that very Messiah.* What was the Method taken to convince Men in this State of the Dispute? Search the New Testament, and you find not one Complaint from the Jews of Scriptures misapplied to the *Messiah*, which were fulfilled in some other Person; which yet ought to be done, had this been as disputable a Point as the other. Its not being so is the true Account of the whole Matter in Issue being reduced to the second Question, *viz. Whether the Prophecies allowed to concern the Messiah, were rightly applied to Jesus?* This is the Point in which our Lord enlightened the Disciples after his Resurrection. The Inconsideration he rebukes them for, was their being short in attending to all the *Prophets had spoken*, the whole of which might have satisfied them, that suffering was as essential a Part in the *Messiah's* Character, as *entering into his Glory*: But the Remedy for the Cure of this, was by expounding the Scriptures of *Moses, and all the Prophets*, to convince them *they concerned himself*. Hence Jesus charges the *Jews* with Infidelity, *John* v. 39. 46. The *Jews* of that Age did not doubt but the Scriptures testified of the *Messiah*, but whether *Jesus* were the Person; and yet this was a Belief that converted Multitudes, and many of great Learning; Men that neither wanted Will to detect, nor Motives to refuse any false Reasoning in the Case. But had the Prophecies produced on this Occasion been known to make nothing to the Apostles Purpose, they would not have had one single Convert; or if they had, he must have wanted common Sense.

For let us for once suppose these mistaken Allegations objected against us; then must they be owing either to *Ignorance* or to *Design*. If to the former, one would expect to meet them most in Men unacquainted with that traditional Sense of the Scriptures

received in the *Jewish Church*. If to the *latter*, 'tis as reasonable they should chuse only Men ignorant in these Matters, to practise thus upon: But the contrary is fact, *St. Paul* who was a Scholar, is the Man that uses more of these Proofs than any other Writer. See *Rom. Galat. and Heb.* *St. Matthew* again, who wrote for the use of the *Jews*, is more express in his Manner of applying Prophecies to *Jesus*, and urges a greater Number of them, than any of the rest. See *Matt. i. 22, 23. Matt. xiii. 34, 35. xxvii. 35.*

Now how absurd and despicable must this Method have rendered him, had the Aim of those Prophecies been a Point in Controversy?

But if Reasoning upon false Principles of his own were so odd an Undertaking in the Circumstances of the Evangelist, to father those false Principles upon his Adversaries themselves is most insufferable. Yet this he manifestly does, by making them abet in a most solemn Manner (*Matt. ii. 4, 5, 6.*) the Opinion of a Passage belonging to Christ, which others have confidently affirmed to have respect to *Zorobabel*; there are Multitudes of like Examples. But this is sufficient to shew that the Apostles cannot be imagined to have argued from any Prophecies concerning the *Messiah*, but such as really belonged to him, and were owned by their Adversaries to do so.

2. That which confirms this Assertion yet more is the Frequency and Significance of those many Titles and Allusions applied to *Jesus* by himself and Disciples. For do we think these had no further Regard than meerly to the Effects and Qualities which rendered such Resemblances lively? Yes certainly; for though their Fitness was the Cause of their being used by the Prophets, yet the true Reason why they are adapted to *Jesus* in the New, is that they were the known Characters of the *Messiah* in the *Old Testament*. Thus

Thus *Jesus* is called the *Light of the World*, not only as he *enlightens every Man that cometh into it*, but because he is *Balaam's Star*; *Isaiab's Light of the Gentiles*; *Zachary's East*; *Malach's Sun of Righteousness*; and *David's Sun*, that goeth from one *End of the Heaven to the other*. Thus he is called a *Stone*, not only as *bruising them that fall upon him*, but because *the corner Stone of David*. See also *Isa. viii. 14. Dan. ii. 45*. So is he a *Shepherd*, because *David*, and *Isaiab*, and *Ezekiel*, and *Zachariab* had represented the *Messiah* as such. He is called a *Door*, with Allusion to that *Key of the House of David given to the Messiah*, which *openeth and no Man shutteth, and shutteth and no Man openeth*. (*John x. 9.* compare with *Isa. xxii. 22. Rev. iii. 9.*)

In a Word, these and many other like Resemblances proceed constantly upon the Ideas of the *Old Testament*; and the just Importance of the Phraseology of the *New* are never to be rightly accounted for, but by comparing it with the Idioms of the *Old*, and every Application of these to *Jesus* is a virtual Declaration of his being the *Messiah*.

3. But that we may not be reproached with depending altogether upon Presumptions, I add, that the Allegations made from the *Old Testament* of Prophecies concerning the *Messiah* are justified by the very Expositions of the later *Jews* themselves. See *Huet. Demonst. Evang. Pro. vii. 9.*

4. It may indeed be replied, that the present *Synagogue* do absolutely deny to the Prophecies, quoted in the *New Testament*, the Views there ascribed to them; but this will appear neither strange, or of any Consequence, if we consider either, 1. The Occasion of the Change, very probably imputed to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which confounding their Expectations of a glorious *Messiah*, made them apply to other Persons, those Predictions, which must be fulfilled while their State stood. Or,

2. The Darkneſs that would naturally follow upon their long Diſperſion. Or, 3. The monſtrous Inconſiſtencies of their new Expoſitions. Or, 4. The Neglect of applying themſelves to the written, and attending wholly to their oral Law. Or, 5. Their violent Partiality and furious Prejudices againſt *Jeſus* and his Diſciples, which ſtuck at nothing though ever ſo falſe and wicked to oppoſe them.

Having ſhewn, that *Chriſtians* have gone upon a ſure Ground, by urging no Prophecies as concerning the *Meſſiah*, which were not really intended of him:

I proceed,

2. To ſhew, that the Chriſtians in applying theſe Prophecies kept to their true Senſe, and urged them for no other Events, than ſuch as their natural or allowed Conſtruction prove them to be accompliſhed in.

Upon this Occaſion Chriſtian Interpreters have proceeded in ſomewhat different Methods, each, as they thought, agreeable to the Principles of our Adverſaries, in expounding the Books of the Old Teſtament. For,

1. Some there are, who think the allowing any Paſſage of prophetic Scripture more Views or Senſes than one, to be a very improper Way of interpreting, and expoſes the Scriptures to the Inſults of prophane Men upon Account of the pretended Ambiguities.

They urge, that a Prophecy ought to decypher its Perſon or Event as punctually as a logical Definition does the Thing defined by it; otherwiſe the Mind is in Suspence. They admit, that many eminent Perſons were Types of the *Meſſiah*; upon which Account the Paſſages concerning them miniſtered pertinent Occaſions, laid hold of by the Holy Ghoſt, for breaking out into lofty Flights and Characters of the *Meſſiah* ſo typified; but

they will not allow the typical Capacity to extend so far as to give those Persons any Share in the Predictions themselves. Hence they deny to *David* any Part in the xxii. and lxix. and so to *Solomon* in the ii. xlv. or lxxii. Psalms, any farther than as the Afflictions of the one, and the Glories of the other rendered the Composer's Meditations upon these an Introduction to the much greater Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah prefigured by them.

They think it no small Advantage to this Opinion, that *Justin*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and *Eusebius*, proceeded thus in their Disputes with the *Jews*. But above all, they plead the Examples of *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, excluding *David* from those Words of the xvi. Psalm, though uttered in the first Person, *Thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy holy One to see Corruption*. And, lastly, though they look upon the Apostle's arguing from Types as an irrefragable Proof of the *Jews* of that Age owning them, yet they do not discern the same Evidence of their owning a first and secondary View of Scripture, by any such Expositions left us in the New Testament.

2. On the other hand *St. Jerom*, and those who followed him, have allowed several prophetic Scriptures to proceed upon more Senses and Views than one. Some have both an historical and prophetic Import: Some they esteem entirely prophetic, but so as to concern some nearer Event first, and afterwards some more noble and distinct. And this again so implied, that sometimes one is verified in the literal, the other in the mystical Signification of the Words. Thus many have understood the seventh of *Isaiab*, concerning the Prophet's Son first, and in part, but ultimately and strictly of *Jesus Christ*. Thus that of *Nathan* to *David*, thus the ii. lxxii. lxxxix. and cxxxii. Psalms, concerning *Solomon* subordinately, but *Christ* in the full Latitude.

Thus, lastly, those of *Isa. xxxiv. Dan. ix. Joel ii. Malac. iv.* of the Calamities of the *Jews*; the first by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the second by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, all of them by *Titus* afterwards; and not only so, but of so many Shadows of the dreadful Day of Judgment: And the Period put to that typical Age and State, as the last great Emblem of the Consummation of all Things, and the Dissolution of the whole World.

Without balancing their Allegations on either Side, let it suffice, that both agree the Prophecies to be properly fulfilled in none but Christ only, with this Difference, that the one asserts them to be in no Sense at all, the other, tho' in a limited, yet not in their ultimate Design, to be completed in any other Person.

But be that as it will, I add yet farther, that no rational Doubt can remain, whether the Apostles and first Christians did not alledge every Prophecy quoted out of the Old Testament, in that very Sense which the Jews then received, and were persuaded the Holy Ghost intended it in.

I come now,

IV. To consider the *proper Force of Arguments drawn from this Topic of Prophecies, and how far the Proof of the Christian Religion doth really depend upon them.*

1. That which renders the setting this Notion in a true Light the more necessary, is a Notion advanced by some, that *Miracles* are the sole Foundation of a Christian's Faith; and that the *Prophecies* of the Old Testament applied to *Jesus* as *Messiah* in the New, are only apt Accommodations of Passages literally fulfilled before, but mystically suited to other Events afterwards.

To confute which Opinion, and to establish the Point I am upon;

1. I observe that Prophecy is itself one Species of

of Miracles. For 'tis as impossible to foretel future contingent Events without God informs Men of them, as 'tis to raise the Dead with a Word only: Hence each of these are placed upon an equal Foot under the *Jewish* Law. Because God by whom only either of these could be effected, will not permit Credit to be given to Impostures by such Operations as himself hath reserved for divine Truth. In this Sense therefore it may be said indeed, that the Christian Religion stands on the Bottom of Miracles; but then since Prophecies themselves are Miracles, this is a Sense foreign to the Case in Hand; for it renders the Opposition implied to be between them altogether impertinent.

2. Taking then Miracles and Prophecies apart, this I think we may truly say, that Miracles alone had been Evidence sufficient of the Christian Faith, supposing no Prophecies ever to have been given.

This the *Jews* cannot upon their own Principles deny, because their Law was established by Miracles, but not predicted by any Prophet; whatever Evidence then sufficed for the Authority of their Law, the like might have sufficed for the Authority of our Gospel. Consequently Miracles alone had been sufficient for the Gentiles, who had no revealed Word; and by the same Reason must have been sufficient for the *Jews*, admitting that no Prophecies had been imparted to them; because this Supposition would render their Case, and that of the Gentiles, the same.

3. Yet considering the Deference paid to Predictions of future Contingencies among the Heathens themselves, Prophecies well made out, may very naturally be supposed as proper a Motive of Faith, even to these, as Miracles of any other Sort.

And therefore they who make just Reflections upon the best Heathen Authors, will think great
Wrong

Wrong done to this Argument, by them who affirm, that Prophecies, well attested and fulfilled, would not be admitted with the very *Gentiles*, as a competent Foundation of Doctrines brought by Persons so predicting, though such as were in no Degree known or believed before.

4. But then to the *Jews*, Arguments of this Kind were indispensably necessary, and even stronger Motives of Assent than any Sort of Miracles whatsoever. *Necessary*, because to Men who had received those Prophecies as of divine Authority, the Truth of God stood bound to see them performed. And therefore these were not only Instructions to whom they ought, but Warnings to whom they must not hearken, as the *Messiah*.

For the accomplishing, or not accomplishing the Predictions allowed to concern that Character, was sufficient to determine the Title of any that should take it to himself. And to them again *stronger* Proof than Miracles apart; because those were common to others, these peculiar to himself. Hence in his Answer to *John Baptist's* Disciples, our Lord's Appeal lies not to Miracles in general, (see *Matt. xi. Luke vii.* compare *Isa. xxxv.* and *lxi.*) but to such of them more especially as were predicted of the *Messiah*. Any other Miracles would have proved *Jesus* a Prophet, but none but such as were express Marks left for that Purpose, could prove him to be that great expected Prophet.

And thus the Testimony of Miracles was comprehended in that of Prophecy. Again, this was a *stronger* Motive to the *Jews*, because Miracles were an Evidence to Mankind at large, but Prophecies fulfilled were calculated for the Circumstances of that People, and would, if rightly weighed, have obviated all the Difficulties used, or even possible to be objected by them.

The End of the First Volume.